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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• A wet and inclement spring passes. June is almost a ghost as this column of record is written and sent on to the National Archives for entombment. The United States Senate is engaged in a burlesque with the House of Representatives over the budget. Monies have finally been voted for the Nicaraguan contras to be used for non-military purposes. And suddenly all Washington is being taught a lesson in the uses of non-military materials and plain guff by a barbaric group of street punks from old Beirut.

• Under the holy writ of Allah the jackals took over a TWA flight ten minutes out of Athens and ordered its crew to fly back and forth across the Mediterranean Sea while they bravely tortured and murdered a trussed U.S. Navy diver, terrorized unarmed citizens, and stole their personal belongings. Then, after freeing all but forty U.S. citizens, the beasts secreted their remaining victims in Beirut and began complaining about Israel's breeches of international law. More astounding still, some Americans, particularly pols and journalists, took these protests seriously, speaking in awe of the louts' ardor to die a martyr's death. Can one really die by ambushing unarmed innocents? If these animals were sincere they would attack the Israeli army, and if we were a serious people we would catapult them to heaven with an American force large enough to pacify Lebanon for those Lebanese who have had enough of these cowardly hypocrites.

• Intellectual rock fans are still sweating pensively over the parting words of Miss Madonna, who ended her 28-city tour before a sellout crowd at Madison Square Garden much the way rock singer Prince recently ended his. Both exited after breaking a "mystery" statement over the heads of the agape wimpletons in their audiences. Mr. Prince's brought to mind Alexander Pope in *The Dunciad*—"The higher you climb, the more you show your arse"—for Mr. Prince vowed that he was departing to "climb the ladder." Miss Madonna's was more incontinent. "When you next see me," she began, "I will have changed," she continued, "into another life form." Phew! "But," she went on, "you'll still wonder," she added, "why I have such an effect on you." Argh! Maintenance crews drifted in to take down the stage and still the insufferable gasbag wheezed on, now thanking "New York for the ultimate inspiration." Presumably, she was referring to money.

• The FBI finally uncovered a gang of spies that can expect no sympathy from the American left. According to government investigators, Mr. John A. Walker and his accomplices did it solely for the money, no vision of New Dawns or the Brotherhood of Man being necessary. There will be no re-enactment of the Hiss or the Rosenberg saga here. Unless one thinks that the role of such credulous outfits as the *Nation* magazine can be played by the Chamber of Commerce. Ha, ha, ha. Despite First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's remonstrances against Kapitalist peccancies, corruption continues almost as a way of life in the Socialist Motherland, to say nothing of goofing off. On June 2 *Pravda* reported that there is still no sign of that twenty-eight-car freight train that disappeared on the famed Tomashgorodsky run. The freight cars carried crushed rock, a Soviet delicacy relished by opsomaniacs in the *nomenklatura*. On the other hand, *Pravda* did proudly report that the government crackdown on alcoholism was putting a large number of moonshiners out of business, including the infamous "Grandma Sonya," an elderly moonshiness whose

product had rendered many of the Marxist-Leninists of progressive Yastrebove like unto a United States Senator at vespertime.

• The fans of Miss Beverly Sills are no longer going to be getting their money's worth. Working in close collaboration with a Philistine endocrinologist, the famed soprano has lost 75 pounds, a reduction that may not damage her tweeter but think of her woofer, to say nothing of the possibility that high notes—once so crystalline and celestial—may now be accompanied by the rattling of ribs. One eminento whose ribs remain amply cushioned along with knees and elbows, fingers and ears, is the Senior Senator from Massachusetts; and in *Ladies' Home Journal* Mr. Kennedy, speaking in the now familiar New Age Liberal's confessional mode, declares his "sincere regrets" about past "times of indiscretion." Nevertheless, he concludes, "I don't find looking back terribly useful"—except, of course, for fugitive recollections of a dessert left unconsumed or of a sweetie's well-turned ankle. Hollywood is threatening to put the pest, Miss Samantha Smith, into a TV series, "J.G. Culver," unless public indignation can be mobilized; and two bodies being returned to Italy from the English soccer rebellion arrived in the wrong caskets.

• Old Blues, returning for Yale University's annual reunion, found a new alumni group on hand, so to speak. Wearing lavender bulldog pins, these were the worthies of Yale Gay and Lesbian Alumni, or simply Gala. And America's journalists were there, pen and pads at the ready: "Bittersweet memories," "college years spent apart from the mainstream," "hostility and indifference," on and on the press bawled. One lachrymose gay made pilgrimage to the room where he insists he tried to commit suicide. It was a dormitory bathroom. Another bragged about how his Gala contingent, singing the Yale alma mater, had quickly become the largest alumni group in New York City's annual Gay Pride Parade—"People just jumped off the sidewalks and said 'Where have you been all these years?' " There are more arduous ways to become an Ivy Leaguer. Homosexuality is now the *fons asinorum* of American doogoodery. New York City has even opened a special school for homosexual youth where the assembled geniuses can dress in drag. "We wanted an environment," pronounced a homosexual fortunate enough to serve at the school, "where gay and lesbian kids would not be subjected to immature teenagers." Twelve-year-old transvestites are often victimized by teenagers with a lot of growing up to do and very little experience with the opposite sex.

• In São Paulo, Brazil, an international team of investigators solved one of the enduring mysteries of World War II when they positively identified the remains of Nazi butcher Dr. Joseph Mengele. Unrepentant to the bone, he lived modestly but furtively with a few dull-witted acquaintances in Brazil until drowning in 1979. According to those who knew him, he remained confirmed in his baleful beliefs to the very end. He feared for his future but had no regrets about his past, very much like all those New Age Liberals who remain to this day unrepentant. Certainly ex-senator George McGovern has no regrets. In a *Parade* magazine interview he remained unbowed and as insensible as ever, whining in conclusion: "Can you imagine what it is like to run for the presidency, lose every state except one, and then see the landslide winner driven from office in disgrace less than two years after six out of 10 voters preferred him over you?" Doubtless in the cool of the evening down São Paulo way Dr. Mengele suffered such daft reminiscences, too. And what if two years later 1972's "landslide winner" had choked to death on a fish bone? Apparently we are to be stuck with the sophistries of these true believers until they expire, and many are probably better swimmers than Dr. Mengele.

• A wag in Louisville, Kentucky has successfully bamboozled the city's potentates into providing him with a "white-only job environment" by massaging their raised consciences. Working with blacks in the sanitation department caused Mr. Gary Pearl stress, he complained; and what enlightened American can turn a deaf ear to a fellow human being's stress? Radio Marti, a new Voice of America station, began daily broadcasts to Cuba with almost immediate benefits. After

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years of banning the songs of Mr. Frank Sinatra Communist Cuba capitulated, airing "Come Fly With Me" on June 18, and God knows how many other glorious arias since. Miss Karen Quinlan shook this mortal coil as did Chef Boy-ar-dee; he was 87. In Rome the testimony of the Pope's convicted assailant, Mr. Mehmet Ali Agca, continued, revealing information that is bound to cause much rethinking among Christians and perhaps even Jews, for Mr. Agca is none other than Jesus Christ.

• In Van Nuys, California, high school football coach Mr. Jeff Engilman found himself in a pickle for allegedly drawing vaginas on tackle dummies, and it did him no good to claim that the markings represented "attack points"—circuitous reasoning works only on Capitol Hill, coach! Animal rights groups found themselves on the defensive when it was revealed that the destructive walking catfish of Southeast Asia is spreading throughout Florida and that the disgusting Cuban Death's Head cockroach is also proliferating. Finally, Miss Jane Fonda's dog ended up in a common hoosegow, accused of being an accessory to robbery. Miss Fonda's illustrious wife, Mr. Tom Fonda, insists that the dog was merely being used by local youths on a crime spree, but it is not to be ruled out that the dog, Taxi, was merely putting into practice ideas about private property that echo and re-echo through the Fonda manse—ideas, that is, about other people's private property.—*RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Fly In, Fly Out

I am very disappointed with *The American Spectator*'s decision to publish Matthew Stevenson's article "Old South Africa" in its June issue. It is another example of the fly-in-fly-out school of reporting on a country with one of the most complex situations of any nation in the world today.

I recognize that Mr. Stevenson has a nice touch as a writer, but he simply doesn't have any familiarity with the country beyond a very brief visit. His descriptive passages and his interview with Beyers Naude ("His eyes are what you notice first. They have a searing quality, in the sense of Scottish righteousness, but also a twinkle of benevolence") don't help us understand the depth of problems in South Africa or the difficulty of arriving at solutions. The comparison with America's racial problems is too absurd to comment upon. The South African population statistics are utterly different.

Morever, Mr. Stevenson simply doesn't address the principal questions. What would be the practical result of a South African system based on one-man, one-vote? Would the country be transformed into a people's republic similar to Mozambique next door? On April 12, Mr. Naude wrote on the *New York Times* op-ed page that the country would turn to socialism. Would the new government be able to manage the country and feed its people? Would the new South Africa enjoy the state of human rights that prevails in Angola, where 30,000 Cuban troops maintain the regime, or Zimbabwe, where a North Korean–trained brigade performs the same function? What would happen to the large Indian minority? One wonders whether Mr. Stevenson is even aware of the history of black violence against Indians in Natal Province. Has Mr. Stevenson pondered the frequent inter-tribal violence in the mines and what that means for the future? These and many other questions need to be considered in any truly serious article on the future of South Africa. Readers of *The American Spectator* deserve and expect the most thoughtful analysis of the South African situation, an analysis based on a deep understanding of the country's history and ethnic composition.

—Anthony Harrigan
Sewanee, Tennessee

Matthew Stevenson's article on South Africa in the latest issue of *TAS* ends with Mr. Stevenson declaring that "one leaves South Africa with a sense of relief." Curiously, I finished his article with just such a "sense of relief." Not only was his essay little more than a soporific travelogue, it was also a simplistic, even ritualistic wringing of the hands that has come to typify the reaction of critics of South Africa. On the one hand, the Reagan Administration policy of "constructive engagement" has obviously been a failure in Mr. Stevenson's eyes, for the situation is as bleak and grim as ever (and old black men continue to doff their straw hats at passing whites and move aside to let white people pass). Thus, constructive engagement must not be the answer. But on the other hand, cutting off ties doesn't seem to be the answer, either, for Stevenson asserts that South Africa's "cures lie in greater contact with the West, especially the United States, rather than in isolation." Oh, heavens, what to do! Continue collaborating with the horrible regime? Or pull out and watch the fireworks? Mr. Stevenson never says, and probably hasn't even thought the problem through to that point.

But Mr. Stevenson's article suffers from worse ailments than "half-bakedness"—it also borders on the absurd in numerous passages. Take, for example, his rather lengthy (and somewhat tedious) description of his meeting with two notorious critics of apartheid and the South African government. Or his "daring" dash into the black suburb of Soweto (whose entrance he wistfully likens to the border between Vienna and Prague). After carefully documenting these events, Stevenson then asserts that South Africa is similar to the Soviet Union and its political system. Now, perhaps I am mistaken, but I have yet to hear of a U.S. journalist meeting openly with Anatoly Shcharansky or Andrei Sakharov. Those who question the authorities in the USSR are sent to the Gulag for hard labor or to special psychiatric hospitals for "reeducation." Usually their reeducation involves the use of torture and mind-altering drugs, and does not include meeting with foreign journalists to disparage the government. What's more, foreign tourists don't often casually cross the Austro-Czech border unaccompanied and unmolested. And if South Africa is as remarkably similar to a Communist or fascist country as Mr. Stevenson intimates, perhaps he can explain why there are more than 2 million foreign blacks from neighboring southern African nations who have voluntarily entered the country to work. Mass, spontaneous masochism, I'd wager. But such a phenomenon is strangely absent in other "repressive" countries in the world.

Then comes the greatest humdinger of them all: Bishop Desmond Tutu is compared with none other than Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and even Abraham Lincoln. I can stand a lot of rhetoric, and even downright nonsense, but this is going too far. It is akin to comparing Fidel Castro to Simon Bolivar. At best, Tutu is hopelessly naive; at worst, he is pro-ANC and pro-Marxist. His inflammatory rhetoric and speeches bespeak a commitment not to peaceful, evolutionary change, but to violent, revolutionary turmoil and bloodshed. He is South Africa's answer to Jesse Jackson, complete with trite refrains and silly epithets.

All this is not meant to imply that what Mr. Stevenson said in his article was anything new; we are all used to reading this type of liberal claptrap in the myriad publications that pollute our newsstands. But to pick up *TAS* and read a piece that would seem much more at home in the *Washington Post* is disturbing, to say the least. I consider *TAS* one of the few publications where one can turn for a conservative viewpoint on timely issues, but not so with Mr. Stevenson's article. I hope next month I can look forward to the insightful analysis I have come to enjoy.

And just for the record, let's remember that changes are taking place in South Africa, and they will continue. Rather than imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions against South Africa, I believe that we should continue our present policy of "constructive engagement." Increased U.S. investment will lead to increased influence and leverage, and change can take place gradually. To do otherwise could be a costly blunder, one which we would most certainly live to regret.

—James D. Van De Graaff
Legislative Assistant to
Congressman Philip M. Crane
Washington, D.C.

Matthew Stevenson's article on South Africa was informative and insightful. Because South Africa has become a favorite target of the Soviet Union and its allies, and because so many of its critics appear to be indifferent to human rights violations committed by Communist and Third World dictatorships, conservatives have sometimes been reluctant to denounce apartheid. But the hypocrisy of others cannot justify conservative hypocrisy. As the Introduction to the State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1982* put it, "Friendly governments are often susceptible to quiet diplomacy, and we therefore use it rather than public denunciations. But if we never appear seriously concerned about human rights in friendly countries, our policy will seem one-sided and cynical."

—Joseph Shattan
Washington, D.C.

The tunnel of horror described by Matthew Stevenson in "Old South Africa" was so unrelentingly foreboding, especially as he describes or alludes to the nature of the Afrikaner, that I feel my experiences in the Republic some three years ago might give balance.

In walking the streets of Johan-

(continued on page 46)

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EDITORIALS

HOLY SHIITE

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

(Editor's note: This column was written two weeks before the hijacking of TWA flight 847.)

In the course of this column I shall perhaps make the most daring judgment heretofore uttered by a syndicated columnist in many a moon; and I am well aware that columnizing has long been practiced by such audacious fellows as William F. Buckley Jr., who incidentally has just set sail upon the Pacific in one of his superannuated boats, and Garry Wills, who does not need to ply the waters to become all wet. My judgment may indeed shock many; but remember I am only doing what is right, which, as Mark Twain once observed, does have a vast potential to astonish.

Blood is again being shed in Lebanon, though the Israelis are nowhere to be seen. Some years ago I made bold in the pages of *Harper's* magazine to observe that if Israel were nonexistent internecine warfare would still fever the Middle East. Moreover, without Israel the area would be even less stable and less hospitable to Western influence. For such a modest statement I was treated to a vituperative of the utmost hostility. There was an enormous and absurdly obvious letter-writing campaign orchestrated against me, and a *Harper's* writer at work in the Middle East was put under house arrest. An Arabist even placed my name unlovingly into a book arguing that we Yanks are bigots and ignoramuses when it comes to our pronouncements on Islam and the Arabs. I was called a typical American know-nothing.

Well, fellow know-nothingniks, cast your eyes on Beirut. For sheer barbarism, often of a distinctly ignoble character, it would be hard to replicate the scene anywhere, though Cambodia in the recent past and Afghanistan today do come to mind. This is not the Israelis against the Arabs, nor even Christians against Muslims. Today, militiamen of the Shiite Amal movement collaborate with the Lebanese Army's overwhelmingly Shiite Sixth Brigade to battle PLO fighters, mostly Sunni Muslims, in Beirut's Palestinian camps. Meanwhile, Syria stands by admiring the show and Arab diplomats fly about trying to effect yet one more end to hostilities.

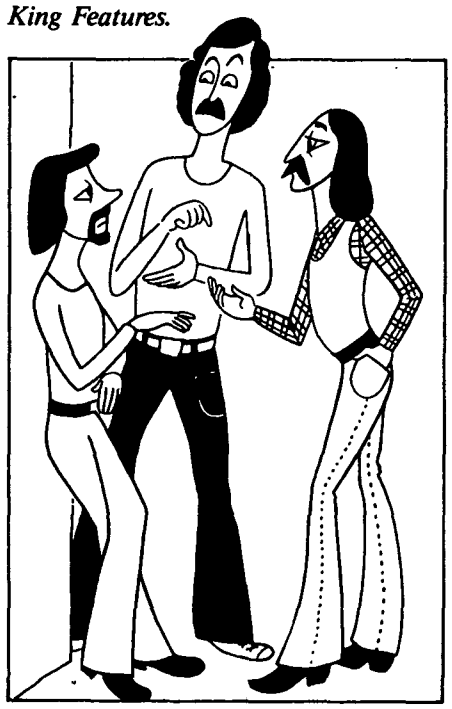
The scene is particularly grisly, the violence being utterly unrestrained and often quite cowardly. Palestinian civilians are being carried off to prisons and to summary executions. Ambulances are being barred from combat zones while Palestinian combatants and civilians alike are left to bleed to death in the street. There is rape and pillage; and, grisliest of all, helpless Palestinians are being pulled from their hospital beds to be murdered in cold blood. Where is the outcry from the civilized world? Where are the journalists who not so long ago were sending exaggerated reports of Israeli brutality to their papers back home?

Do you recall the shocked reproaches that greeted Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982? Some Westerners compared Israel to Nazi Germany—such buffoons would never hold up a Communist state as a standard of brutality—as civilian suffering was described in profuse detail. All this, despite the clearly observable fact that the PLO makes war on civilians a matter of policy and obviously was positioning its forces in the midst of civilians, for instance in hospital courtyards and in schools. We now know that casualties were being wantonly exaggerated, but Israel and its major ally, the United States, suffered an immediate diabolization. We were lowered in the eyes of some not very perceptive people to the level of amoral aggressors. When Christian militiamen massacred opponents in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila, the recriminations grew still more intense.

Well, Sabra and Shatila, along with Burj al Brajneh, are precisely the scenes of today's brutality. It is from these camps that Palestinians are being kidnapped and murdered, not by Christians or by Israelis, but by Shiites with the apparent acquiescence of Syria. These Shiite soldiers are not running amuck, and the civilian casualties are not accidental. This barbarism is a matter of policy.

The next time that we hear charges of United States or Israeli brutality and amorality, remember what has taken place in these Palestinian camps. The unavoidable fact is that Israel, the United States, and all the nations of the West are morally superior to the brutes at work in Beirut today. Our reluctance to speak out against their atrocities tarnishes that superiority, but the superiority is there for all to see. That is my daring judgment. I am sure it will cause consternation and indigestion in some departments, and champions of far-off lands will rush in with charges of moral imperialism or some other metamorphic preposterosity. But the adamantine fact is that, notwithstanding all the propaganda heaved at the West, our moral standards are generally superior. No government adhering to Western culture would allow its soldiers to act as they are in Lebanon and to go unpunished. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*



THE MOSCOW 313

Comity reigns anew in the lit world. Abundant as it is with progressive humanitarians, its disagreements can be astoundingly brutal and its foul play as brazen as that of Nero's Rome. Yet now we can return to the old courtesies—for a while. The Association of American Publishers has handed down its decision on that controversial list of American books to be exhibited at the venerable Moscow Book Fair; all 313 selected by the Association's felicitously named International Freedom to Publish Committee will be there. Not one conservative or neoconservative tome is to be added to mollify the brutes at the National Endowment for Democracy who had objected that the list failed to reflect the diversity of American intellectual life. Moreover, the Association is returning the Endowment's pieces of silver.

Established to promote democratic values in the world, the Endowment saw that barring conservative and neoconservative books from an exhibition titled "America Through American Eyes" smacked of intolerance reminiscent of the intolerance

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practiced in backwater America when a local reactionary tries to ban from the school house the books of, say, Kurt Vonnegut. The Endowment had made a $50,000 grant and asked that the Freedom to Publish Committee expand its list, cutting nothing. Recriminations of the utmost ferocity followed, replete with charges against the Endowment for "intimidation" and "censorship." A very cunning sort of censorship might indeed have been contemplated. Most of the books on the list are so vulgar, infantile, and unintelligent that were conservative books added even Mikhail Gorbachev might shun the approved 313.

In fact, this tawdry list of generally uninteresting and unintelligent books goes a long way toward explaining why so many foreigners can so effortlessly maintain their sense of cultural superiority over us. These are not just books chosen by ideologues of the left. They are the choice of Philistines. Admittedly, a few thoughtful and even a few elegant books appear on the list. But even Philistines make mistakes.

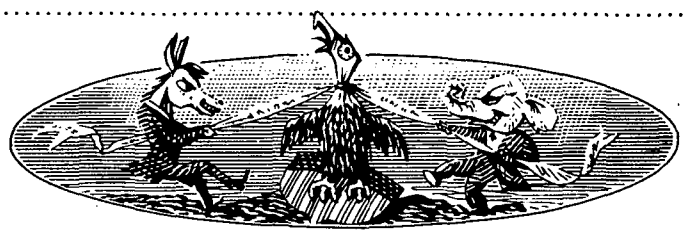
On their behalf let me add that they are not as intolerant as their list signifies, though it contains books attacking Henry Kissinger without including any of Kissinger's quite formidable memoirs. It contains books booming all the enthusiasms of the left-wing shanty intelligentsia plus attacks on Administration policy and America in general without including alternative books. But the selectors know no better. Just as movie critic Pauline Kael could in the early 1970s vow that she knew no one who voted for Richard Nixon in his 1972 landslide, those who selected this list have read nothing in years that might jar their fatuous sensibilities.

They have every right to be furious over the Endowment's charge of ideological imbalance. There is even evidence that they tried to give conservatism as they understand it a fair shake. Did they not include *Cross-Country Skiing Right* by Hall, *Courtside: The Fan's Guide to Pro Basketball* by Hoenig, and *The L.L. Bean Guide to the Outdoors?*

But can books like this compare with the really important books that are published in the Republic? As I say, those who selected these books are somewhat limited. Believe me, they see no politics whatsoever in choosing *Jane Fonda's Workout Book* or in their multitudes of books about feminism, the black experience, the environment, and peace. These are people whose tastes have become very pedestrian. Thus they chose not one but two monographs on *Rolling Stone* magazine. They fret about health and opt for *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* by the Boston Women's Collective—and remember the list is for a book fair in the capital of the socialist motherland. These selectors are not total greenhorns. They had to think about those who would be at the fair. Arthur Darack's classic *How to Repair and Care for Home Appliances* is bound to be popular with Muscovites, as will *The Home Energy Decision Book* ingeniously conceived by the Sierra Club.

All of which brings to mind one more argument on behalf of the final decision of the Association of American Publishers. The Soviets regularly ban American books from their fair. In these days of international tension, is it not best that our publishers assist them? A book about American freedom and prosperity could be a dangerous thing. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



REAGAN CAVES IN

by Tom Bethell

This is written on "day seven" of the latest hostage seizure, so of course I don't know how things will look by the time you read this. But it is a good bet that by then the Israelis will have turned over their prisoners; or failing that, nothing much of substance will have happened. Maybe President Reagan will have affixed a yellow ribbon to the American flag. Or Sam Donaldson will be continuing his gloat about how Reagan has "grown" (i.e., adopted his view of the world). More bombings and hijackings may have occurred, and certainly will in the future if they haven't by the time you read this.

Nonetheless, judging by President Reagan's deplorable press conference on June 18, and his equally deplorable decision ten days earlier to abide by the unratified SALT II agreement (the one "signed" by Carter's kiss on Brezhnev's cheek), the following can be said about Reagan with little fear of contradiction: He is only the latest in a succession of weak Presidents.

All his political life Reagan has shown a mastery of a certain style of symbolic government. But against the intransigent Kremlin bosses or the determined Amal Shiites, this symbolic style does not and cannot possibly work.

Reagan's technique has been to ignore his opponents. And very effective it has been. He uses conservative rhetoric—he has found that over the years this appeals to a majority of the people—and then he waits for his opponents to accuse him of ideology, right-wing extremism, neglect of the "real world" in favor of "simplistic solutions," and so on. Reagan can't wait for this to happen. His response is to go on TV and act the injured innocent (his favorite role). Everyone can see at that point that his critics are lying, that they probably do not themselves believe what they are saying, and Reagan does not even have to respond to their mendacious accusations.

This way he has won four elections, two to the presidency.

His opponents have been endlessly frustrated by this performance. They know that the more they rage at Reagan, the worse they will look. Reagan has demonstrated the simple point that getting elected to high office in the United States can be a purely passive affair.

Once in office, of course, it is a different matter. There you are expected to do something from time to time, although here again Reagan's instincts have served him well in domestic policy: If government gets out of the way, and in particular gets its greedy hand out of people's pockets, then the economy will do well and everyone will love you (except for the frustrated *dirigistes*, but they are a minority).

Still sometimes in foreign affairs you have to take some action, and here Reagan has brought to the job precious few convictions. His real *modus operandi* has been to cock an ear and to listen to the decibel level of those yelling at him. In Washington, of course, the loudest shouters (by far!) turn out to be the liberal left, whose positions are consciously or unconsciously congruent with international socialism as a matter of course. Reagan instinctively defers to these people, not because he agrees with them but because they shout the loudest. He campaigns, one might say, outside the Beltway, but once in office tries to appease those within it. The *Washington Post* makes more noise than *Human Events*. That is Reagan's pragmatic bottom line.

Conservatives are frustrated by this, but for most of them it is not too bad. Some are flattered to find the President at least using their arguments and (so modest are their expectations) they are satisfied with that. And of course the Republican office-seeker types can have their jobs with their nice big offices, limousines, and hallway deference from the bureaucrats. They will be permitted to strut as though important on the Washington stage, provided they don't try to alter the general policy direction that was laid down in the Carter years. (If they do that they will be in big trouble. Ask Don Devine, James Watt, Brad Reynolds, etc., etc.)

And of course, as Reagan no doubt realized, the conservatives will still vote for him because they don't have anywhere else to go. Today, of course, there are no more elections for Reagan.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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That's what the left means when it says that Reagan is a "lame duck." The only referendum facing him is that of the "history books." Reagan obviously believes that if you do what the liberals want, they will give you a nice write-up in the history books. He should consider the case of Jimmy Carter.

The key point, however, is that Reagan's passive technique of prevailing over political opponents cannot work with Moslem warlords or Kremlin capos. They have this great strength, which Reagan's political experience has not taught him to cope with: They don't mind looking bad on television. Reagan's tremendous eagerness to meet with Gorbachev shows that he has not figured this out yet.

Shortly after Gorbachev's elevation as Kremlin pontiff, Reagan recognized (correctly) that large chunks of the U.S. media were in some sense on Gorbachev's side against him. (Read Mary McGrory and Robert Kaiser in the *Washington Post*, if you don't believe me; above all read the headlines.) This was no problem, nothing unusual for Reagan. They had also been on Mondale's side, on Carter's side, on Pat Brown's side, whoever was his opponent. Reagan trounced them all. So Reagan would only have to appear on TV with this Gorbachev fellow. (I surmise that Reagan has been thinking along these lines.) And once again, the viewers would "elect" Reagan. Moreover, everyone would say that Reagan was a peacemaker. As for Gorbachev, and indeed the entire Politburo, they would find out what they ought to have known all along: that Reagan is a very nice guy who wouldn't hurt a fly. Mark Green would probably nominate Reagan for the Nobel Peace Prize on the *New York Times* op-ed page, Nancy would clap her hands with delight (at last, she would be . . . accepted . . .) and then the Reagans could go back to their ranch in a golden sunset and everyone would live happily ever after.

The trouble with this scenario, of course, is that Gorbachev doesn't have to face the voters. Therefore he doesn't mind looking bad, if need be. His goal is to destroy the United States—or better, to subordinate it to the will of the Kremlin.

Reagan doesn't seem to realize that the American politicians he has so successfully competed with have abided by specific, artificial rules governing U.S. elections—rules which do not apply in most parts of the world, and indeed do not apply for most people in the U.S. most of the time. Reagan and Mondale genuinely did compete with each other for the voters' affections. Reagan and Gorbachev are *not* in a competition. Two men may compete for the hand of the same girl. (Again, they will abide by specific, artificial "rules" of courting.) But if a man tries to rape a girl, and she resists, they are not at that point "competing" with each other.

The U.S. in the present day is not "competing" with the Soviet Union. It is in a to-the-death struggle with it. Reagan has lately signaled that he does not understand this, or perhaps he would simply prefer that it were not the case, or perhaps he believes that he can change the situation by meeting with Gorbachev, and making a few more concessions to him. (Certainly Gorbachev will not agree to a meeting in the absence of such pre-arranged concessions.)

As for the SALT II cave-in, someone should provide Reagan with the following simple analysis of the problem (may I suggest George Will, who wrote an uncharacteristically muddled column defending Reagan following this weak decision): It doesn't matter how many nuclear weapons the Soviets have above a certain number, which they long ago exceeded. If our security *vis-à-vis* the Soviets depends upon arms control, then it depends upon the Soviets' assenting to our security. Which is ab-

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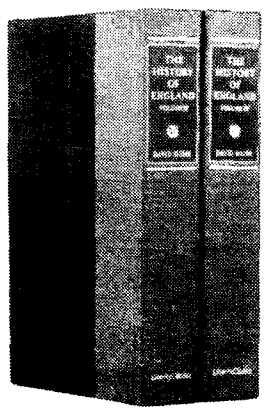

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surd. It is the gangster ideology of Communism that threatens the world, not marginal increments to their arsenal. The Soviet threat is not limited by getting them to agree not to build more than (say) 20,000 hydrogen bombs. It can only be limited by building defensive weapons with the capacity to destroy Soviet missiles in midair. The Soviets are of course using arms control talks to get our agreement not to build such weapons. Reagan will soon be under great pressure to cave in on Star Wars—pressure from the Soviets, the liberals, and our "allies"—and we should be prepared for him to cave in, using as he does so some misleading rhetorical cover about "never giving in to Soviet demands."

In his recent press conference, Reagan showed inexcusable weakness by defining as "terrorism" any retaliatory act that does not strike specifically at hostage-takers. As the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out, this amounted to sending out "engraved invitations to terrorists throughout the world." Certainly this is the case in Lebanon, which Reagan has now declared to be a jurisdiction wherein no one in an identifiable position can be held responsible for terrorism. Reagan even promised to pin the label of "terrorist" upon *himself* in the event that the U.S. military makes anything other than a pinpoint response to assaults on American citizens. With such a public reassurance, I would feel home free if I subscribed to the Shiite cause. This comment by Reagan was the low point of his presidency.

Reagan is weak because he wants to be loved by everyone. This is no doubt an admirable quality, and desirable in the vast majority of people. Certainly it is to be expected in an actor. But it is dangerous in a President because it precludes leadership. True to form, Reagan has once again assumed that it is his job to respond to the most vocal pressure group within earshot—in this instance, the forty-odd hostages and their families. That is the symbolic meaning of yellow ribbons: the subordination of the national interest to the far more intense special interest group of victims. That way Reagan buys himself short-term peace and the rest of us medium-term and long-term insecurity.

I don't see that we can expect much in the way of improvement for the remainder of Reagan's term. He has now plainly opted for a policy of placating those whose sound is given greatest media amplification, and he has in place the necessary agents for such a policy—the spineless Robert McFarlane at the National Security Council, for example. (Oh, for the days of Brzezinski!) Meanwhile, Pat Buchanan and the speechwriters will serve the useful function of making tough-sounding noises while contrary policies are pursued.

I keep thinking this. Suppose the Soviets were to drop a nuclear bomb. Just one. Nowhere special. In the Great Plains, say. And follow it up with the usual hectoring and denials and contradictory accusations of American responsibility and so on. And naturally we could rely on the instant media analysis: Let us demonstrate to the world that we are not their moral equivalent. Let us be calm. Let us not overreact. How would Reagan respond? Might he not think: Well, it's my job to be the peace-maker. If I were to respond in kind, innocent Russians would be killed. I would be the terrorist, in the eyes of the world. . . . This just shows that we need arms control talks more than ever. . . . Hello, Mr. Gorbachev. Are you there? . . . Where do you think we should meet? Moscow you say? Very well, if you say so. . . .

That's the way your mind starts working when leadership collapses. It's not just humiliating. It's demoralizing. □

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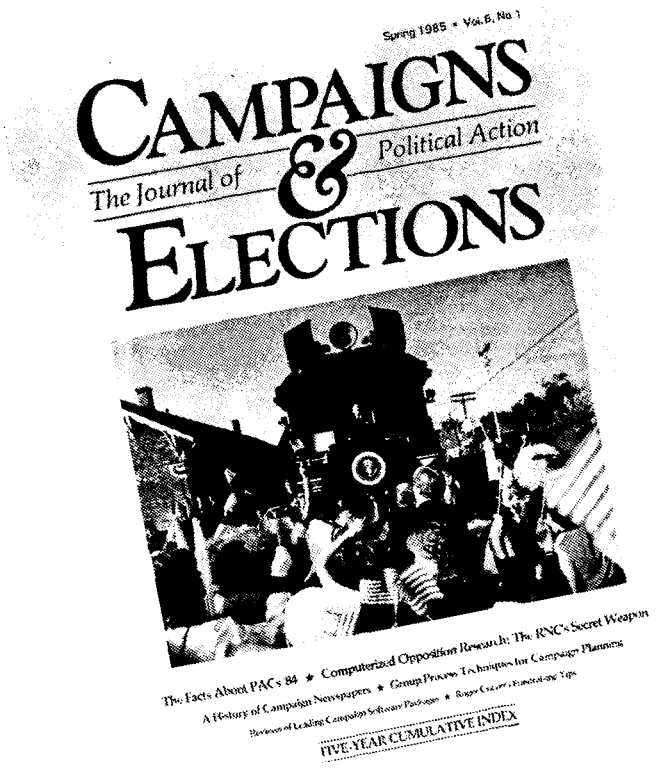
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Fred Barnes

REAGAN'S SQUANDERED MANDATE

The President has only himself to blame.

It was a warm and sunny day in mid-June, and President Reagan wore a broad grin as he stood among the tall pines in the Rose Garden. He wasn't positioned amid a cluster of trees, mind you, but among Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson, and the rest of the Los Angeles Lakers, who had just won the National Basketball Association championship. Reagan is a master of ceremonial events, and this was no exception. He extolled Abdul-Jabbar, twitted Kurt Rambis, and displayed more charisma than Johnson, which is no small achievement. He even violated the politician's rule against wearing silly hats and put on a yellow baseball cap that dwarfed his head; he got away with it.

Yet there was something missing in the event. Two years earlier, the Philadelphia 76ers had come to the White House for a similar event. They too gave Reagan an autographed basketball. As he walked alone toward the Oval Office, Reagan was badgered by photographers to dribble the ball. He glanced over his left shoulder at them, smiled maliciously, bounced the ball off the ground once, and strutted into his office. Jimmy Carter would have dropped the ball off his foot and rushed clumsily to retrieve it. With Reagan, the single dribble was a fleeting moment of grace.

But not this year. As Reagan, alone again and clutching a basketball to his chest, walked toward the Oval Office, reporters, photographers, and television cameramen strained at the rope which penned them on the south side of the Rose Garden. They did not ask the President to dribble. They nagged and whined. How could Reagan go along with the soon-to-expire Salt II treaty in light of the horrible things he'd said about it in the late 1970s? Would he care to comment on the inconsistency? Reagan trotted out a quip. "I'm here to play basketball," he said. The tension, the atmosphere of adversarial combat, was not relieved.

All of which is a long way of saying that Reagan has lost something in his second term as President. True, he is still popular; the ground he lost in public opinion polls during the flap over the Bitburg cemetery visit was rapidly regained. And it's not the so-called second-term blues that's drained him, a phenomenon that Morton Kondracke of *Newsweek* characterized as "a kind of political Alzheimer's disease, a progressive and incurable loss of potency leading sooner or later to terminal lame duckery." What is missing is the aura of conviction that Reagan wore in his first term, the notion that here was a man of strong beliefs who was willing to defy history if necessary to have his ideological way. In short, Reagan had a mandate; his own convictions, bared to the world in proposals and themes, were his mandate. Now he doesn't have one, and the press was bound to sense this and act accordingly.

Well, for heaven's sake, why doesn't Reagan have a mandate? Isn't he the most ideological President of the century and maybe ever? The answer is yes, he is, but he is certainly doing a convincing job of masking that. Except for a stolen moment or two (the State of the Union address last February was one), Reagan over the last year has been emphasizing his pragmatic side. It's helped him win a few breathtaking victories—the landslide re-election, the first MX vote—but it's also led him to a series of five decisions that, six months into his final four-year term, have deprived him of a mandate. The painful truth is that Reagan has largely himself to blame.

Let's start with the first critical decision last summer, namely to run a good vibrations, happy-talk, no-issues campaign. Not to put too fine a point on it, but Reagan abdicated the leadership role he'd played so effectively four years earlier in challenging Carter. Then, Reagan made ideas the focus of his campaign. The public wasn't necessarily clamoring for supply-side economics or a massive military buildup (a gentle buildup would have satisfied public opinion). But Reagan sold it on both ideas; he created a mandate and then sought to carry it out. He led. I'm probably being generous in guessing that there were ten senators who actually favored Reagan's three-year tax cut in 1981. But Reagan insisted, and he got his way.

In his campaign last year, Reagan insisted on practically nothing specific. There was no program for cutting the deficit significantly, no call for slashing federal programs that funnel billions to the middle class, no plea for a particular tax-reform measure, no bid to enlist the nation in support of the anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua, no argument on behalf of a Reagan doctrine of aiding anti-Communist guerrillas around the world. Reagan got specific on only two matters, and he did so in reaction to Mondale, not as part of an ideas offensive of his own. The President said he wouldn't raise taxes, and he vowed not to cut Social Security. Later, in an interview with *Human Events* last January, he got even more specific about Social Security, saying that his no-cut pledge applied to cost-of-living increases in Social Security benefits.

How bad was the Reagan campaign? One day last September Reagan invited in a half-dozen journalists for 90 minutes of drinks and talk in the library in the basement of the White House. It was off-the-record, but that didn't mean Reagan had something to get off his chest that he couldn't say for public consumption. Tax reform? Oh, well, he'd get around to a firm proposal sometime after the election. Deficits? That would be handled in time. The only subject on which he talked animatedly was movies (he liked *The Karate Kid*). There were no proposals and no themes, except the obvious one that Reagan wasn't Mondale.

Even political junkies were bored to tears. For good reason, columnists Jack Germond and Jules Witcover entitled their campaign book *Wake Us When It's Over.* And the flashiest piece of

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reporting in the book doesn't involve the Reagan-Mondale clash at all; it's a well-reported exposé of Mondale's use of delegate committees to spend beyond federal ceilings in the primaries. The *Newsweek* book on the campaign has a more stately title—*The Quest for the Presidency 1984*—and its reporting is impressive, especially about the Reagan re-election operation. But what are the memorable tales? They don't involve big ideas, but things like the secret effort to get Nancy Reagan off the President's campaign plane and former President Richard Nixon's brilliant but essentially peripheral memos to Reagan strategists. Pollster Robert Teeter said it best about the campaign: "Nothing happened." And because nothing did, little progress is now being made on the conservative agenda.

The second fateful decision came in early April when Reagan reneged on his promise not to touch Social Security at deficit reduction time. This was an odd step for Reagan to take. Of all politicians, he is most aware of how skillfully Democrats are able to use the Social Security issue against Republicans. Even though Reagan's 1981 plan to trim benefits was withdrawn after several days, Democrats bludgeoned GOP candidates with it in the 1982 election. In 1984, Reagan took great care to avert a recurrence of this. Thus the no-cut pledge, made in blood.

Ironically, it wasn't the arch-pragmatist James Baker III who cajoled Reagan into going along with a Social Security cut. It was the new White House chief of staff, Donald Regan, the man who says his job is to let Reagan be Reagan. Of course, you can make a case that cutting Social Security is exactly what the real Reagan relishes. But politically the President knows the foolishness of this. So do

Patrick Buchanan, the White House communications director, and Edward Rollins, the President's political adviser, which is why they were not brought into the discussions at the White House until too late. The decision had been made, and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee was already producing bright blue bumper stickers with the slogan, "Save Social Security Again—Vote Democratic." The letters are white, except "Again," which is bright red and underlined.

What is missing is the aura of conviction that Reagan wore in his first term, the notion that here was a man of strong beliefs who was willing to defy history if necessary to have his ideological way.

The Social Security issue itself, though, was not what did the most harm to Reagan. It was the fact that he broke his word. For sure, this wouldn't matter for most politicians; switching on issues is commonplace, even for Presidents. Carter campaigned on cutting defense spending, then advocated increases once he got to Washington. No one was shocked. But Reagan's stature as a political leader is uniquely linked to the notion that he is a man of strong and unflinching convictions. For him, adjustments and accommodations are allowed—reducing the the 1981 tax cut from 30 percent to 25 percent—but not outright reversals. Those drain his credibility.

The upshot of Reagan's turnabout on Social Security was predictable. Within weeks, Republicans and Democrats in Congress began probing to find if he would crumble on his other campaign pledge of no tax hike. If he yielded on Social Security, why not taxes? Republican Senator Pete Domenici, the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, broached the subject. By June, both Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Democratic Congressman William Gray, the chairman of the House Budget Committee, were suggesting the time was ripe for a tax increase. "You will have to face the reality of dealing with some revenues," Gray said euphemistically. Before the Reagan switcheroo on Social Security, Gray had been talking quite differently. Boost taxes? No way, he said. The people spoke unequivocally on that subject in the election and declared they want no tax hike.

Only three weeks after changing positions on Social Security, Reagan was faced with another crucial decision—whether to go on national television to pitch for military aid to the contras in Nicaragua. On this, Reagan went eyeball to eyeball with liberal Democrats in the House, and Reagan blinked. Fearing that military aid would be defeated in the House, he opted to give another speech entirely. It was on the deficit reduction package that included the Social Security COLA cut. Afterwards, the anticipated torrent of letters and cards to Congress backing the President's position was a mere trickle. The speech did not stir the faithful.

And contra aid went down the tubes, too. The fallback position of the White House was "humanitarian" aid for the contras, which would include food and supplies but no bazookas. This lost by 215-213 in the House. Had Reagan gone on TV, he surely could have changed at least two votes. Look what happened after that vote when Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega flew to Moscow to make a withdrawal on his aid account. Democrats were chagrined, and when humanitarian aid was voted on a second time seven weeks later, 26 of them switched sides. The aid cleared the House by 64 votes, 248-184.

Note, however, who the catalyst was—not Reagan, but Ortega. It wasn't bold leadership by Reagan that turned Congress around; it was a bad public relations move by a dictator. Ultimately, fallout from the contra episode did not come in the form of denying all aid to the guerrillas. The result was a changed equation in Washington. In the power struggle between liberal Democrats in Congress and the Reagan Administration, the liberal side gained. The liberals, by a stern display of opposition, rolled Reagan. And if it worked once, it may again.

Nor did Reagan offer a profile in courage on defense spending. Next to the tax cut, the military buildup was the greatest achievement of Reagan's first term. But he showed little resolve in continuing it in his second. Instead, the President has presided over, and participated heavily in, the collapse of the coalition behind the buildup. What with deficits a soaring issue and Pentagon rip-offs such as the $7,622 coffeepot on everyone's mind, Reagan could be excused for bowing to reality on defense spending. But what has always made him such an appealing political figure is that he was so often unwilling to make such a bow. In 1981, Republicans told him a three-year tax cut was not a possibility, but he got it.

On defense, he scarcely tried this year. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, whose influence has waned after a brilliant first four years, wanted 9 percent real growth in Pentagon spending. In the budget submitted last January, Reagan asked for a 5.9 percent boost. In the early April compromise, Reagan agreed to pare that to 3 percent. Then in May, while he was traveling in Europe, Reagan went along with zero real growth. And he'll be lucky to get that, since the House passed a budget resolution calling for minus 4 percent real growth.

Reagan's role in the crumbling of the defense consensus involves more than a string of escalating compromises. His softened language on the Soviets, in line with arms talks in Geneva and his quest for a summit with Soviet dictator Mikhail Gorbachev, has made them appear less threatening. Why build if there's no demon to combat, no "focus of evil"? Certainly Reagan mentioned none when he was asked last March about the murder of Army Major Arthur Nicholson by Soviet soldiers in East Germany. He said a protest had been filed about "the tragic death of this man." Reporters were stunned by the President's go-easy posture. "There seems to be a lack of outrage on your part, sir," one asked. "A lack of outrage?" Reagan answered. "No, you can't print what I'm thinking." Would the shooting prevent a summit? another reporter asked. "No, it would make me more anxious to go to one."

The prospects for a summit are bright, but it likely won't take place until next year. Well before then, senior White House officials insist, Reagan will have shaken the doldrums. The panacea? Tax reform. Reagan and his aides were buoyed by the initial

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response to his package, which has such populist elements as a $2,000 personal exemption and a top rate on individual income of 35 percent. But, in truth, the Reagan plan represents a serious tactical blunder, the fifth of the decisions that have destroyed the Reagan mandate.

By releasing the purist Treasury Department proposal for tax reform last November, the Administration created the standard by which all reform plans would be judged. It treated every special interest harshly—business, labor, everybody but individual taxpayers. Yet Reagan could argue that the bill was fair and populist and not a sellout. Then, Treasury Secretary Baker decided to buy off a few of the interest groups. He gave in to the oil and gas industries on intangible drilling costs, which waved a red flag in the face of liberals. He speeded up depreciation of factories and machinery; it would have been slowed under the first Treasury proposal. And he lowered the rate on capital gains to 17.5 percent, abandoning the idea of treating them as normal income. This was eminently justifiable on economic grounds.

But it was bad politics, and it changed the nature of the tax reform battle, making Reagan appear as less of a white hat and more the champion of special interests. The time to accommodate the interests was not at the outset. It is when a reform bill reaches the Senate, where Republicans are in charge. Whatever damage the Democratic House might do to a purist Reagan proposal, the Senate could rectify. It could aid the energy crowd, deal with depreciation, and meet the high-tech industry's need for special treatment of capital gains. And Reagan would get none of the political blame for this.

That's not the scenario the Reagan team pursued. And perhaps it matters little. Tax reform has never been quite the realigning issue it has been cracked up to be. More than the middle class, it helps the rich and the poor. The well-heeled are already Republicans, and those making less than $12,000 a year will probably never be. It's a fresh chunk of the middle class that the GOP needs to overtake the Democrats as the majority party. Tax reform, at least as it's been proposed by Reagan, isn't likely to draw this chunk to the Republican fold.

Oh, yes, there's a footnote to the tale of Reagan's lost mandate. It's that apologies are in order for Baker and his crowd. When they were at the White House, they were pilloried by conservatives for nudging Reagan to the center. With Regan as chief of staff, that was to change. And besides, Reagan would be a free man at last, with no future election to worry him. The result is not a more conservative Reagan—quite the opposite. It is a Reagan, fresh from a landslide election, who is more accommodating than ever, even at the expense of his mandate. Who'd have guessed it? □

Dinesh D'Souza

THINKING AHEAD CONSERVATIVELY

Is the Reagan coalition up to it?

Conservatives are generally strong on philosophy, but weak on strategy. For years, while in the minority, conservatives operated on the principle of Lord Salisbury, "Find out what annoys your enemy most, then do it as often as possible." This is a lot of fun, and sometimes it can be a very effective dissident ploy. The problem is, conservatives are no longer dissidents.

The White House has been occupied for the last five years by the most conservative U.S. President of the twentieth century. The GOP retains control of the Senate. The House remains predominantly Democratic, but its extreme leftists are now balanced by the members of the Conservative Opportunity Society. Since 1980 there has been a remarkable turnover of personnel in Washington, D.C.—the capital is now teeming with right-wingers. Conservatives control the most sophisticated fundraising and direct-mail operations in American politics. And control of the intellectual and policy agenda has fallen into the hands of the New Right and neoconservatives, as the left has conceded. All of this means that what *National Review* half-jokingly wrote in November 1980, "We are the establishment," is now a (perhaps embarrassing) reality. Conservatives must face it and work on strategies to consolidate power and translate their ideas into policies that will have enduring impact.

It is fashionable for conservatives to be grandly pessimistic about the Reagan Administration, to the extent that one perverse firebrand with College Republicans wanted his group to distribute posters saying, "Death to Reagan." But conservatives have to remember what a luxury it is to criticize the President for insufficient enthusiasm for policy ideas that only six years ago were regarded as outdated and comical. For all its weaknesses the Reagan Administration has, from the outset, had a keen sense of political strategy.

The President realizes the value of patience in politics. Thus Reagan has kept his sense of priorities, choosing the fights that are important and the fights he is likely to win. In a short time Reagan has turned the once-domineering Speaker of the House into a disgruntled orb who actually predicts his own defeats. Reagan has also shown his ability to seize issues like tax reform and force the Democrats, after a bit of futile posturing, to capitulate on the key points. Perhaps Reagan's greatest failing has been pre-emptive concession—requesting only $14 million for the contras, not enough to win the war and thus not worth expending a lot of political capital over; calling for minor scale-back of programs like the Education Department and the National Endowment for the Arts which probably should be eliminated; and proposing a budget with no defense spending increase whatsoever, virtually guaranteeing that a budget compromise would involve a defense reduction.

Still, Reagan remains a popular leader who has, against the odds, effected real changes in policy and in the way Americans view government. He has also held together the unlikely coalition of libertarians, traditionalists,

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evangelicals, and blue-collar Catholics who swept him into power. Many of Reagan's supporters, though quick to berate him, could not possibly have accomplished what the President has. Nor do they have Reagan's instinct for strategy, even though they pose as experts and treat the President as a kindly bungler manipulated by malevolent aides.

Congressman Jack Kemp has noted that there is a discomfort about democratic politicking on the right. The old right and the neoconservatives are, by and large, good ideologues but bad politicians. They produce ideas that last, but candidates like Goldwater and Moynihan who are either too principled to win votes or too concerned with votes to retain their principles. For the old right and the neos politics pollutes ideology, because it fuses what should be with merely what can be. Also democratic politics defers to the judgment of such people as reside in Dubuque, Iowa; although conservative intellectuals are satisfied that Dubuque residents are pretty sturdy, morally if not mentally, they distrust the notion of yielding to their superior wisdom. For Eastern establishment Republicans, democracy is ochlocracy. It would be utterly disreputable if it were not a mechanism for distributing so much influence. Greenwich- and New Canaan-weaned Republicans would clearly rather swing golf clubs than elections, if it came down to that.

Conservatism does have the New Right and the Christian Right, which believe in organizing at the grassroots. But both groups, being relatively new to the transactions of politics, do not realize that it is the art of the possible: You have to give a little to gain a lot. Some New Right purists are determined to cling doggedly to a single ideological bone—all the way to the municipal van. And they prefer to alienate rather than co-opt: I recently attended some meetings of the Kingston Group, where Reagan appointees are invited to talk to sixty of Paul Weyrich's friends—these chats often disintegrate into rabid *ad hominem* attacks on the Administration spokesman. The Christian Right, with a few exceptions, has so far shown a reluctance to join coalitions, the clay and mortar of elections, because it seeks theological certainty in what is, after all, only politics.

All this suggests a general immaturity on the right about staying in power and governing effectively. William Rusher is right that many conservatives suffer from a "siege mentality—they can't stand success." After all, with success comes political responsibility. That means having to substitute for lamentations about the abandonment of Taiwan a prudent policy toward China. It means having to administer programs well which were initially targeted for extermination. It means using a hostile media to get the message out, instead of merely alleging bias and Soviet sympathies. It means fulfilling the conservative agenda while maintaining, even increasing, popular support.

Fortunately, conservatives have learned some lessons from their five years in power. Patrick McGuigan, editor of *Initiative and Referendum Report,* says the right has recognized that it has got to be a "movement of the people." It has to eschew both the rhetoric and the policies of the old Republican elitists. Reagan has realized this from the beginning. He has articulated an inclusive conservative vision better than any major American politician in this century, McGuigan says. He has co-opted classical liberal principles and cast aside some of the old conservative rhetoric. Reagan is fond of quoting that eighteenth-century radical, Tom Paine, "We have it in our power to begin the world over again," a notion that would be anathema to Burke, Oakeshott, Herbert Hoover, George Will. In his policies Reagan is very much in the tradition of Democrats such as FDR, Truman, and Kennedy: sternly anti-Communist but practical in his dealings with the Russians, accepting of the Welfare State but keen to expand opportunity through growth, and believing that America is a country with a special moral purpose, what Reagan calls "our rendezvous with destiny."

Neoconservatives are probably closest to this centrist vision, although they are always pressuring Reagan for a more ferocious foreign policy approach to the Soviets. The neos are viewed as academics and intellectuals, not politicians, yet a number of them hold important posts in the Administration, in such diverse fields as labor, education, and civil rights; and some of the President's most effective bureaucrats (such as Linda Chavez, Kenneth Adelman, and William Bennett) come from this camp. The neos will probably continue to be a fertile source for appointments in future conservative administrations, because of their respectable credentials and ideological determination; they are not, however, good at rousing the masses, as the Jewish vote in 1984 bore out.

The New Right and Christian Right are always discontented. In a sense this is useful because it puts pressure on the Administration to act. Perennially optimistic activists, such as Jerry Falwell, who endorse everything Reagan does and prematurely declare for Bush in 1988, greatly reduce their leverage. Yet too much caterwauling can also reduce leverage because it gets you written off. For most of the last two years Richard Viguerie, Howard Phillips, and others were denouncing Reagan as an apostate and planning to start a new populist party. Why should the Reagan Administration pay attention to these people? How can they expect to get political appointments to effect their agenda? Luckily the third party effort failed. The New Right strategists lost some of their hubris (especially after Viguerie found he couldn't even get himself elected lieutenant governor of Virginia); now they are back on the team.

"We are now in the mood of 1957," David Smick says. "There is a popular man in the White House, the economy is prosperous, and we are at peace." And the GOP is complacent, as in 1957.

Pat McGuigan says, however, that the Republicans have been taking the New Right and Christian Right for granted, and there are limits to how long this can continue. He does have a point. Many of these people, especially the evangelicals, entered politics after a historical resistance to it, because they cherished a narrow agenda. If they lose hope that such issues as school prayer will ever be resolved their way, they will simply return to their small towns and Sunday schools, depriving the GOP of thousands of dedicated recruits.

But John Buckley, press secretary to Jack Kemp, warns that in order to appeal to young voters, the Republican party must continue to downplay divisive social issues like abortion and prayer, and focus on economic growth and foreign policy. There are 94 million people between 18 and 39 years old, Buckley says, only 70 million above 39. "This demographic bulge is where the battle for the majority party is going to be fought." And Yuppies are "pro-choice on everything," and don't want to associate with people they consider intolerant, Buckley says.

This provokes strong protest from Cal Thomas, vice president of Moral Majority. "A coalition built on the sacrifice of the unborn is immoral," he says. But it's not so clear that the agenda of the Christian Right and young urbanites are mutually exclusive. Mildred Webber, congressional liaison for the Heritage Foundation, points to polls by Gallup and others showing a religious revival among the young. While she concedes that Yuppies tend to be pro-abortion, "Reagan was very forthright about his positions on abortion, prayer, and other social issues during the 1980 and 1984 elections. This didn't deter young people from voting for him in huge numbers." Like the gender gap, the supposed dichotomy between youth concerns and New Right concerns is largely a media concoction, Webber says.

Paul Weyrich agrees but argues that in any case social issues are crucial for conservatives to win elections. Although Republicans are divided on abortion, he says, they are not likely to abandon their party simply because they dissent on one issue, while anti-abortion Democrats (including blue-collar Catholics and Hispanics) will be tempted to break ranks with their party. The last few elections have borne this out. McGuigan says, "The Republicans, with the defense and domestic issue constituencies, always had around 40 percent of the popular vote. But how do you go from 40 to 51 percent? The difference is traditional values."

Traditional values are also the key for conservatives to recruit support among blacks, according to William Keyes, chairman of "Black Pac." "Crime and prayer in schools are two issues that touch the lives of black people just as much as any others." Yet the Republican party virtually ignores them when it goes after the black vote. Issues like enterprise zones are also important, Keyes says, but blacks are not as enthusiastic about these as, say, controlling crime in inner cities. "Conservatives have to learn to appeal to blacks based on what is important to them rather than what they think should be important to them."

Even if conservatives reconcile their differences over the social issues, Buckley believes that GOP chances of becoming the majority party will depend on whether Republicans can avoid falling back into their traditional pattern of nagging about deficits, pandering to big corporations, and trying to cut Social Security. These are the conventional weaknesses of both the old right and the "austerity wing" of the Republican party. But big business often bankrolls the Democratic party and seeks to restrict, instead of expand, free trade at home and abroad. Social Security, however inefficient, is not a handout but an earned benefit; it would be cruel, not to say politically unpopular, for government to renege on its promise to the elderly at the urg-

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ing of the Republicans. Finally, as Michael Kinsley has written, the issue of ballooning deficits has in a way helped the Republicans, because it converted them, almost instantaneously, into the party of growth and opportunity, as Democrats suddenly found themselves warning about "fiscal irresponsibility" while the American people yawned.

What does all this mean for the 1986 and 1988 elections? Are conservatives formulating an agenda that will animate their activist groups and build on the popular support that swept Ronald Reagan into office? David Smick, a political consultant who advises Lewis Lehrman, offers this sobering view. "We are now in the mood of 1957," Smick says. "There is a popular man in the White House, the economy is prosperous and we are at peace." And the GOP is complacent, as in 1957. "The temptation for conservatives is to think that if the American people were pleased with the last six years, they'll want to give us another four." But voters are always restless for change, Smick says, and not always grateful. They forget easily—by the 1984 election, the recession of 1982 that Mondale kept alluding to was a distant memory. In 1986 and 1988, as in 1958 and 1960, it will be the party of charisma, fresh thinking, and a vision for the future that will win the voters.

Smick doesn't think that the Democrats will take the Senate in 1986—they are "behind in technology and money" and they "haven't dealt with the problem of identity." Half the

Democrats, he says, still think that if they only had a good TV candidate with communication skills, they would recapture the American voter. On the issues, he adds, "the Democrats are in the position of the Republicans in the 1930s. They don't have ideas of their own. They are the party of negation and grouchiness. All their hopes are pinned on a Reagan screw-up." But by 1988, Smick thinks, the Democrats will have moved toward the center: "Both parties will be growth parties and tough on the Russians," he predicts. So we will be in the position of 1960, when Nixon and Kennedy were remarkably agreed on domestic issues and foreign policy.

If this is true, it means the Republicans will need a strong candidate who will inspire the various subsets of the conservative coalition and at the same time appeal to young people and independent middle-of-the-roaders. Norman Ornstein, a Catholic University political science professor and fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, says the events of 1986 could influence the GOP nominee in 1988. He expects the Republicans to lose a few congressional seats next year, but if the party can hold the Senate, "it will move toward 1988 with ebullience," he says.

But if history is any indication, the party in power will not fare well in the mid-term elections. Pat McGuigan worries that "the Lou Cannons of this world" will blame "the normal six-year downturn" for the GOP on the New Right, hoping to see a moderate Republican candidate in 1988. That would be either Howard Baker, Robert Dole, or George Bush. The Vice President is clearly the front runner among these three. Baker and Dole have no constituency, Smick says, though he sees Dole making a move to the right, to compete for the support of hardline conservatives who have so much influence in the party. Bush's strengths, the strategists say, are his unwavering loyalty to Reagan and his experience in the White House. An implicit Reagan endorsement in 1988 plus Republican National Committee support and a few hardline endorsements—perhaps Bush's fellow Yalie, Bill Buckley, and Jerry Falwell—might make him unstoppable.

But Ornstein says that Bush's backing is predominantly the Republican establishment: He doesn't have a strong base among conservative voters who dominate the GOP primaries, and he would have trouble attracting the broad coalition the party needs for victory in 1988. Christopher Matthews, a savvy Democratic strategist who is press secretary to House Speaker Tip O'Neill, says it will be virtually impossible for Bush to win the New Hampshire primary, because his moderate positions and quirky style won't appeal to the state whose motto is: Live Free or Die. "Bush is antiseptically acceptable to everybody," Matthews argues, "but he doesn't stand for anything. All he stands for is Office. He wants the job. Our guy, Mondale, wanted the job too. He told the people: I am ready. Who cares? People want to vote and work for someone who represents something larger than their own ambition."

That someone, of course, may be Jack Kemp. "Kemp has the hearts and minds of people who are likely to vote in the primaries and be at the convention," Ornstein says, noting that he also has a very inclusive vision which could make him the natural heir to Reagan. This is apparent in Kemp's rhetoric, which brings him 75 percent margins and majority support from every group, including labor and minorities, in his home district of Buffalo, New York. "I don't let liberals monopolize the issue of caring," Kemp says. "Most conservatives talk about numbers. I talk about jobs. I talk about incentive. I don't want to help the rich get richer. I want a tax structure that will help the poor get rich. I want a safety net through which no one will fall, and an opportunity ladder up which everyone can climb." Matthews realizes that whatever candidate his party can come up with will have a difficult time against this. But Kemp does have a weakness, he says: He may not be able to weather the personal attacks and microscopic scrutiny that are part of a national campaign. "He's never been exposed to anything like it, and I don't know if he's tough enough to take it," Matthews says. This is a well-worn allegation against Kemp whose validity, as they say, only time will determine.

If Kemp falters, the strategists wonder whether there is any strong candidate to pick up the baton and represent his wing of the GOP. McGuigan says in that event the toughest challenge to Bush may come from a dark horse—Senator Phil Gramm of Texas or Governor Pierre du Pont of Virginia. Aides to Kemp and Lehrman say that there is a friendly agreement between the two that they won't run against each other. But Ornstein says Lehrman is hampered by the fact that he hasn't held elective office and the "uncertainty" raised by his conversion to Catholicism. Smick naturally disagrees. "Lehrman proved his appeal by the number of votes he got even with a hardline platform in a liberal state. And his conversion was a manifestly personal decision. It wasn't some gimmicky prayer breakfast. I think it may even help him because it indicates sincerity and conviction, which are rare traits in politicians."

Whether Bush or Kemp is in a stronger position for the GOP nod in 1988 may depend on the state of the economy. This factor will be more important in a recession than in a boom. Bush is closely identified with Reagan, and unless he distances himself from the President soon, a politically risky move in itself, he may be saddled with all of Reagan's second-term economic decisions. Smick and Buckley are positioning their candidates (Lehrman and Kemp) in a way to leave them invulnerable no matter what happens to the economy. If Reagan's programs succeed, they expect that the supply-siders will get credit and Bush will be viewed as someone who just went along; if it fails, Bush will be too closely identified with the Administration to escape responsibility, while the supply-siders will be able to point to numerous critical statements of budget compromises and exonerate themselves. Kemp is going through some tortuous machinations to establish his position on the current budget package—he wants to be identified with tax reform, while warning that the rates are still too high.

There is only one candidate frequently mentioned for the Republican vice-presidential nomination—Jeane Kirkpatrick. The fact that she is a woman seems, for some reason, to electrify the people at the Republican National Committee. The fact that she is out of the neoconservative mold and an erstwhile Democrat titillates the neos and Scoop Jacksonites. Joshua Muravchik, a Democratic strategist, says Kirkpatrick's defection to the GOP was very damaging to his party because it accentuated its anti-defense image. Irving Kristol says his ideal ticket is Kemp-Kirkpatrick. If the Democrats nominate Bill Bradley, their most attractive candidate, Kristol says, "we would have the excitement of watching a former basketball star go up against a former football star to replace a former actor."

Ultimately, as political analyst William Schneider points out, what party retains long-term power depends, quite simply, on which keeps its core constituency, appeals to the "marginal voter," and whose programs work. As long as Republican economic policy continues to succeed, as long as the nation is at peace, as long as conservatives continue to echo those quintessentially American themes of strength, opportunity, and traditional values, then (short term vicissitudes aside) the right will remain dominant. We are in the process of what Richard Wirthlin calls "rolling realignment," in which the forces unleashed by conservatism are being tested for confirmation. □

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John Train

STAR WARS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Perspectives on strategic defense.

When I worked in the Pentagon thirty years ago, people were worried, perhaps even more than they are today, about the risk of being blown up in an atomic war. Once I was asked to prepare a speech on the air defense of the United States for my boss, Assistant Secretary of the Army Roderick, to deliver in Grand Rapids, his home town. Naturally I assumed that the citizens of Grand Rapids would want to know first what danger they were in. How good were our defenses? How successful would a Soviet attack probably be? So I asked the Chief of Staff's office for some background material. I was delighted to learn that in the best opinion of the service chiefs, the Russians would probably not be able to get even one bomber through our defenses over a major target (this was in the pre-ICBM era). To do so they would have had to operate beyond their bombers' extreme range, meaning aerial refueling, which they weren't good at. Then, as their bombers lumbered unescorted across Alaska and Canada, they would be hit repeatedly by waves of our interceptors. Dense swarms of interceptors would tear at the thinning ranks of the survivors as they approached their targets. The handful that made it close to our cities would encounter our Nike and Bomarc batteries, deadly against bombers. In other words, we possessed a highly effective strategic defense.

Furthermore, even if the Soviets could indeed score a hit or two it would mean national hara-kiri, since all around Russia's periphery lay American bases, from which our bombers, with fighter escorts, could smash most of the targets in the Soviet Union. So in reality an attack was inconceivable.

Well! These would be comfortable tidings indeed for the citizens of Grand Rapids—and elsewhere. So I got to work on the speech with enthusiasm.

But surprise, surprise: Utterances of this sort have to be cleared by Defense, and the censor was immovable. Not a word could we say about our confidence in America's defenses against air attack. This was not to keep our overwhelming superiority secret from the Russians, who knew it better than anybody; rather, from the American public, for fear of complacency—and budget cuts.

But that was long ago.

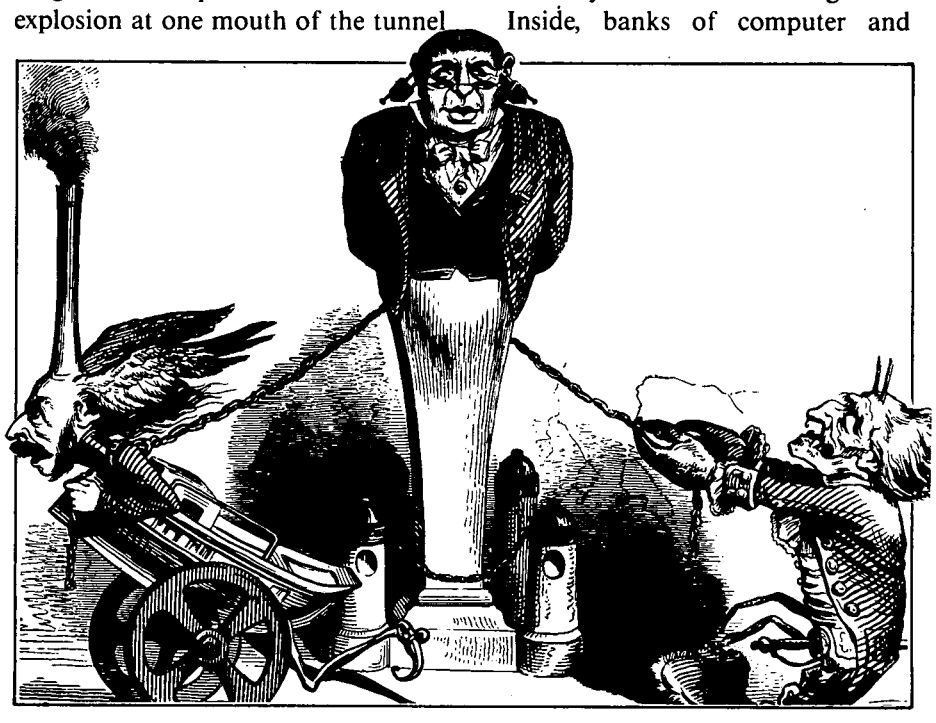
When I recently visited the North American Aerospace Defense command, in Colorado Springs, I got a very different message from that of thirty years back. After being checked out by armed security men, my escort and I entered NORAD's nerve center inside Cheyenne Mountain. You may have seen one like it in the movie *WarGames*. A huge tunnel goes through the mountain. Sets of immense steel blast-proof doors lead off the tunnel to the working areas on the side. This arrangement is to permit the blast of an explosion at one mouth of the tunnel to pass through it and out the other side; if there were a dead end inside the mountain, a bomb at the mouth would shatter everything within, like popping an eardrum. Of course, today's technology should permit simultaneous blasts at both ends of the tunnel, which would wreck everything within; indeed, even one multimegaton nuclear missile blast near the entrance would in all likelihood put the mountain out of action. It was built to withstand a lower level of attack, and has not been upgraded. (The Soviets, on the contrary, have concealed and invulnerable command centers; the one under the Kremlin is a mile underground compared to thirty feet down—almost the same as being on the surface—for the SAC command center outside Omaha.)

Other than that little problem, the NORAD center inside Cheyenne Mountain is an impressive piece of work. It consists of a series of large buildings within hollowed-out rock caverns. They stand clear of the rock walls and are mounted on enormous springs, so that a bombing attack that rocked the mountain would not necessarily shatter the buildings.

Inside, banks of computer and display screens tell you what's going on out in space. There have been 15,000 manmade objects hurled into space, including debris, of which all but 5,500 or so have decayed or returned to earth. (Nothing stays in orbit forever.) If a U.S. space shuttle is going to pass within twenty kilometers or so of some object, NORAD, like an airport tower, tells NASA, and the shuttle can be rerouted. (It has been reported that this equipment is in fact obsolete, and I understand it's being upgraded.)

If the Soviet Union, or whoever, sends up a satellite or fires a missile, it is spotted by our satellites, which relay the information to some dozens of ground sensor stations. Computers compare its data to profiles of known missiles. In a few seconds a report is displayed in the command post, which consists of two three-story computer screens observed from balconies on various levels by the officers and officials in charge. The same information is fed to a similar command post at SAC headquarters in Omaha, to the Pentagon, other U.S. and Canadian command centers, and the White House. Near the top of the screen sits a display with three illuminated indicators: NO, MED, HI. That's NORAD's judgment as to the likelihood that an attack is actually under way. There are about 600 reportable events a year, and so far, once the people running the sensors have been queried, there has never been a MED or HI. Years ago in the pre-satellite era our radars up on the Distant Early Warning line sometimes picked up migrating birds and the like, which caused moments of excitement, but since the present set-up has been in operation there has been only one flurry of that sort. Once, a test program was mistakenly displayed on the main screen, just as in *WarGames*, and relayed to SAC and Washington. Simultaneously, however, the word was passed that it was only a test display.

All this is quite fine, except that if there were a war the Cheyenne Moun-



John Train's most recent book is Famous Financial Fiascos *(Clarkson N. Potter/Crown).*

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tain installation would only last about half an hour, the time for an incoming missile to reach Colorado.

Suppose we really are attacked, what then? First, you have to be sure. There are lots of checks in the system: what is called "the man in the loop." The crew in the mountain talk to the ground sensor station to make sure it really is convinced. Then they call the NORAD Commander in Chief (CINC)—or the Deputy CINC, if the boss is away—at his office down in Colorado Springs, who evaluates the report based on intelligence data and his judgment of the state of the world. If the CINC believes it's serious, he can plug in the Pentagon and the President. Now, all this takes time. If there's the least delay, there may only be a few minutes to respond before it all becomes academic. (As I was having lunch with acting CINC General Rosenberg, I reflected that his hand-held radio—called "the brick," because that's about how big it is—had briefly become a curiously important part of our defensive system.) And incidentally, a Soviet attack on, for instance, our strategic forces might well in practice open with a "precursor" attack against the Pentagon and the White House by missiles launched from submarines a few hundred miles offshore. When NORAD's CINC picked up the phone to Washington there might be no answer. The decision on our retaliatory response would have to come from a lower level.

But what about actually defending ourselves? Alas, at present there is essentially not much we can do. Today, while the Soviets have 10,000 anti-aircraft missiles, we have none. Their interceptors number 1,200, ours 350. We have 120 radars, most of them used by the FAA for non-military purposes; the Soviets have 7,000. In short, we have abandoned our ability to defend against bomber attack, while the Soviets have built very impressive defenses: a complete turnaround from when I was in the Pentagon.

But that's only the beginning of the Soviet effort. For thirty years the Soviets have steadily pushed a program of passive defense, starting with 1,500 virtually impregnable underground bunkers with communications facilities for the key 175,000 civilian and military leaders. It's been calculated that for us to match their civil defense achievement would cost very roughly $40 billion.

They are also carrying out extensive work on at least three types of laser defense, with deployment possible in this decade. The Soviets are spending over $3 billion a year on laser and beam weapons, we less than $1 billion. Indeed, anti-missile lasers are said to be going into Soviet warships. In some areas they are way ahead of us in "strategic defense," although General Abrahamson has said we have the technological lead; they've spent as much on defensive missiles in recent years as they have on offensive missiles, multiples more than us, and praise strategic defense in their military writings. Their opposition to strategic defense is for export only. Indeed, their diplomacy, propaganda, and immensely effective disinformation campaigns perforce try to deter us from doing whatever they are in fact doing successfully.

Nor do the Soviets slacken their efforts when we do. Like a growth-oriented business, they push forward year after year. Indeed, the leadership of the Soviet Union, the Nomenklatura, is ultimately a growth-oriented business, like IBM or the Moonies.

Why do they bother with this unending push for military advantage when war is so dangerous? Because they are chess players, and in chess the threat is more powerful than the execution. In due course they will use any advantage they gain for blackmail, such as pinning down NATO in the face of local aggression.

So what should we do?

Right here is where the debate over the Strategic Defense Initiative, alias "Star Wars," becomes terribly confused. One hears furious arguments over the SDI between people who, because they are talking at cross purposes, in fact agree with each other. Different speakers mean at least six different things by the expression, and any discussion is meaningless unless one specifies which is being talked about. Here are some of the main tactics within the missile defense strategy:

- Star Wars literally: satellites attacking other satellites in space (Buck Rogers vs. Flash Gordon), and a variation, ground-based attacks on satellites.
- A "hardsite" defense of certain ICBM fields, as contemplated in the ABM treaty, in order to preserve a relatively invulnerable deterrent.
- A "terminal" or "point" defense of a country's capital city (as permitted by the ABM treaty) or a number of cities.
- A "light" defense, which would, for instance, shield the Soviet Union from an attack by China, or the United States from the "Mad Captain" scenario, described below. (Both we and the Soviets might well agree on the merits of this arrangement.)
- The dream of a protective antimissile umbrella over part or all of the United States, to defend most of the population.
- A research and development program, to determine what the possibilities are, without any deployment.

These tactics fall into two different categories of objective. One is immediate. The other is remote, perhaps not even attainable. The immediate, urgent need is to preserve a credible retaliatory capability by protecting enough of our silos. The remote objective is to create an adequate general defense for our population.

These two objectives involve different priorities. For general population defense, the best moment to attack a missile is with directed energy weapons (DEW)—laser or particle beam—shortly after launch, as it leaves the at-

THE BOOB

In all formal briefings I've had, whether under Army, Navy, or Air Force auspices, I've been assured that it's exceedingly unlikely that the Soviets would strike the United States without our having a good idea that it might happen. It would only occur, one is assured, during a period of tension. Out there in Cheyenne Mountain, NORAD evaluates a reported attack *in the light of the overall situation* as revealed by the reports they have been getting. Most war scenarios assume an escalating confrontation along the lines of the Cuban missile crisis: a Soviet move in the Middle East that we contested, for instance. They huff, we puff, they huff louder, we puff louder, and finally someone throws a punch, like two cowboys in a barroom brawl. All that, we can understand. But the apparently unprovoked attack, the Borgia dinner when in the middle of the fish course the host's armed retainers rush in and murder all the guests, that's un-American: We don't think in those terms. In military lingo such a surprise attack is called the Bolt Out of the Blue scenario, or BOOB. By common consent we needn't worry about the Soviets trying such a thing. Much too risky.

Well, I'm not sure. Soviet military doctrine gives the utmost emphasis to strategic deception, and calls for initiating a conflict with a surprise blow of crushing force. I suggest that if the Soviets ever do decide that war is inevitable they will back down from that particular crisis, wait for things to cool off, and only then, after we've stacked arms, attack. The moment of maximum danger may be well after the official crisis. For instance, in the second Hungarian uprising the Soviet tanks withdrew from Budapest. It looked as though things had stabilized. Top Hungarian political and military leaders were separately invited to the Soviet Embassy for a friendly talk about a new relationship, with safe conduct home guaranteed. (The Ambassador was none other than our late friend Andropov.) They were seized. Then, when the groundwork was prepared, the tanks rolled back in again. The Prague Spring was dealt with in much the same way.

Another example is the last Egypt-Israel war. Sadat apparently decided to cool it, and sent away most of his Soviet advisers. He then began to hold a series of army exercises in the desert. At first the Israelis went on the alert each time. Then they got tired of it. Finally, when they stopped bothering, the Egyptians at last struck, achieving complete surprise—a perfect strategic deception. Sadat had in fact decided long before that war had to come; better, then, to strike first and strike hard.

One does not know what the Soviets consider an adequate *casus belli*, but they must believe there are a few or they wouldn't have built such an enormous offensive capability. Just for the sake of argument, let's suppose they would go to war to prevent the two Germanys' being reunified under a new Hitler. And suppose that there was indeed a successful revolt in East Germany, followed by a new *Anschluss* under an implacably anti-Soviet West German chancellor, who began maneuvering to detach the satellites from the Soviet orbit. The NATO and Warsaw Pact armies would be mobilized. All our missile subs would put to sea and our bomber forces go to airborne alert.

Would the Soviets launch an artillery barrage and send their tanks rolling west through the Fulda Gap, right into the counter-punch we've been preparing for forty years? Not likely. If they concluded, like the Japanese before Pearl Harbor, that war was inevitable, their best bet might be to switch to a soft-line Soviet premier, accept the new German government, call for new Helsinki talks, and initiate a new era of détente in which they made grudging concessions. Then, in six months or a year, Bang!

That's what Hitler did to them, and what they'd do to us. At the time, though, to our commanders, it would indeed come as a bolt out of the blue.

—*J.T.*

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mosphere, before it has MIRVed and the warheads have put out their decoys. (Within the atmosphere the air molecules weaken the force of the particle beam.) You can figure ten warheads per SS-18 "bus" and perhaps 100 decoys—essentially, metal balloons—per warhead. Obviously, it's more productive to destroy the missiles before one target has become a host. The anti-SDI faction argues that attacking the bus just as it leaves the atmosphere won't work, because the Soviets will speed up the burn to let the bus release its cargo earlier within the atmosphere. Perhaps: But that means less accurate and lighter missiles. In other words, the missile threat is degraded as it copes with our ability to attack it. There's also an argument that the bus could be given a shiny finish, or rotated, or provided with a skirt, or surrounded with smoke released from the nose, or whatever, all to forestall DEW attack to some extent; but there are counters to these counters. And it would require that the Soviets replace their whole existing ICBM inventory.

In any event, you then get a few shots with DEW defenses at the now-MIRVed targets during the half-hour they're in stratospheric flight. This can be with space-based weapons, or perhaps with ground lasers directed by mirrors in space.

For the second objective, defending specific installations in order to preserve our retaliatory capability, you wait until the warhead is committed to a particular target, and its decoys have been stripped away by the atmosphere. You then attack it from the ground with DEWs and short-range missiles. One way is by low-yield, high-altitude nuclear air bursts, which have very little fallout, since most fallout comes from debris thrown up in a ground burst. That's the system the Soviets have set up to defend Moscow.

Congress, however, refuses to use nuclear air bursts to defend U.S. territory, so our defenses might consist primarily of enormous numbers of very small, cheap, highly intelligent non-nuclear missiles, also called kinetic energy weapons (KEW). These will swarm up and engage an incoming warhead at (in missile terms) point-blank range. They explode in the path of the incoming warhead, which because of the combined velocities would be shredded upon impact. Probably the defensive missile would prevent the attacking warhead's nuclear charge from exploding; in case it didn't, the KEW engagement should be at a high enough altitude so that the burst wouldn't have much effect at ground level. That means a very fast-rising defensive missile; hence the name of the SPRINT missile that was part of the discontinued "Safeguard" system. There are also other KEW configurations: The Homing Overlay Experiment weapon unfolded a 15-foot steel umbrella and without exploding simply collided with an incoming ICBM over the Pacific, wrecking it. Both DEW and KEW approaches seem promising for terminal defense.

For obvious reasons it's much easier to defend a specific point from the ground at close range than to erect a leak-proof space umbrella. Much of this "point" defense technology is almost ready, and it's much cheaper than space defense. Particularly, however, it's urgent. Any President is likely to be blackmailed by the Soviets unless they know that we have an effective defense of our own retaliatory forces.

There is, incidentally, an intermediate phase between a "heavy" space defense for most of our population and a point defense for strategic missiles, namely a "light" space-based defense that would work against an attack by a second-rate power or an accidental limited launch by a major power. The Soviets may well want to mount a light defense against the Chinese, and we should have it to cope with what the generals in Cheyenne Mountain call the "Mad Captain" scenario. What does the President do if a dozen missiles come in from an unidentified sub offshore? Attack Moscow? Or Tripoli? Grin and bear it? A "light" anti-missile defense could provide a solution.

Now for the $64 billion question. Will the SDI work? And is it cost-efficient? And here, as I said earlier, the argument goes off the rails by not discriminating between the types of defense one is talking about.

As to defending specific points, such as our retaliatory missile fields in North Dakota, yes: It's possible in the near term, and it's cost-efficient. You can now attack an incoming warhead more cheaply than the Soviets can get it there. So the least one can say is that research and planning for point defense should stay in high gear. The ABM treaty permits research and development as well as deployment of defenses of one missile field or the capital city. The Soviets have taken advantage of this provision; we have not. We started to defend the Grand Fork, North Dakota missile fields, but concluded it was impractical. The main radar station was a huge monument; by overwhelming that easy target first, the Soviets could neutralize the rest of the defense. Now, however, using mobile and/or concealed, hardened, and proliferated defenses we could well defend our missiles against even massive attack.

The Homing Overlay Experiment weapon unfolded a 15-foot steel umbrella and without exploding simply collided with an incoming ICBM over the Pacific, wrecking it.

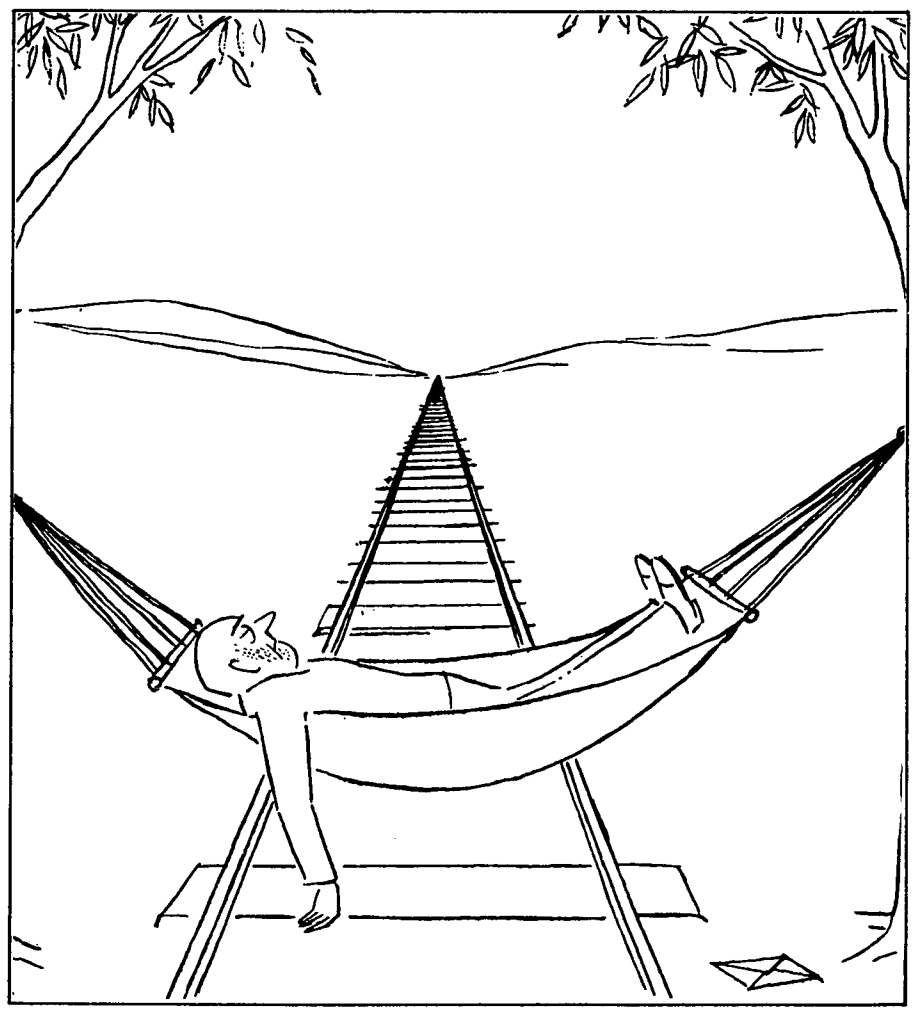
As to a reasonably leak-proof "population" defense, who knows? It couldn't happen for decades anyway. But you don't need anything like a perfect defense. The Soviets won't attack us at all unless the attack would be extremely effective. So the defense needn't be perfect, any more than any other weapon, to serve its deterrent purpose.

Certainly, we should keep up our research program, since the Soviets are known to be far advanced in this field, and will "break out" of the ABM treaty if they feel they can move to a commanding lead. That's essentially what they did in the intermediate-range nuclear force talks in Europe: As we talked and talked, they installed the hundreds of SS-20s we were arguing about their not installing.

It's something of a pity that the President ever said a word about the Strategic Defense Initiative, since before he spoke the research was in fact going forward anyway, carried on by the different services within their respective budgets. With some overlapping and omissions, to be sure, but still moving right along. Now that the whole project's been baptized and given a separate budget, with General Abrahamson in charge of it, there's a target for budget cuts and propaganda exercises.

It's also unfortunate that the President gave the impression that his dream of a general population defense—as distinct from a point defense—was around the corner, or known to be possible, neither of which is true. It's like the problems created for doctors by the *Reader's Digest*'s decades of articles on imminent cures for cancer. To talk about a population defense at all implies a commitment to deploy it, giving rise to a vast brouhaha from the anti-defense left, when all the President needed to say was that it will continue to be given high-priority study.

That not so scientific anti-defense organization, the Union of Concerned Scientists, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was thus given an excuse to enter the fray with a booklet on why strategic defense was impossible. It contains some remarkably sloppy analysis, including calculations off by a thousand times or more and seriously flawed or baseless assumptions, which vitiate the study. This is not the place to dissect that piece of work, the job having been



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done by Professor Jastrow. The UCS has privately admitted many of its defects, but does not, of course, abandon its conclusions, since the conclusions are what they begin from. A similar canard was advanced by the Office of Technology Assessment, which declared that if the Soviets doubled their missile force we would have to double our battle stations in space to counter it. In fact, it now looks more as though we would only need increase our stations by half if they doubled up. Then, some critics say the space stations themselves will be vulnerable. Not necessarily. It may be that they can sit quite deep in space, able to attack ICBMs but hard to attack themselves. They can dodge around, put out decoys, and, unlike ICBMs, be armored and shoot back at their attackers. Indeed, that contest may come to resemble the evolution of World War I's defenseless and vulnerable observation plane into today's formidable fighter. Of course, attacking our space stations would preclude the advantage of surprise. And there's some chance that the anti-ICBM defense can be conducted from the ground: That's part of what research will reveal.

On the other side, in 1983 the Defensive Technologies Study Team under Dr. James Fletcher, former head of NASA, spent 100,000 man-hours examining the prospects for strategic defense. They consulted hundreds of experts. They concluded that SDI would work, thanks to the emergence of "powerful new technologies." And of course the Soviets themselves believe in it or they wouldn't be pushing ahead themselves—while objecting to our efforts.

With malice toward all, I would also like to deprecate a worthy group in Washington called High Frontier (another term for the SDI). Its publications argue for a hell-for-leather abrogation of the ABM treaty and immediate deployment. Well, not so fast! Five Presidents and their advisers have sweated blood over this issue, and so far nothing that worked and was politically acceptable has been found better than straight retaliation. It's premature to say that we *should* deploy, which means precipitating heaven knows what Soviet countermeasures.

No, what the President's doing, as distinct from saying, is right: Push the research as fast as we can, so that if ever a deployment decision needs to be made we'll have a sound basis for it. Another point to remember is that in the SDI *study* game we have intrinsic advantages over the Soviets. For political reasons they can put more soldiers in the field than we can, but they don't have anything like our depth in computer technology and vast national familiarity with computers.

Then, we have more money. The Soviets spent about $500 billion to counter our B-52 bombers—successfully, until the cruise missile came along. That's a lot for us but excruciating for them. Now comes an equally big challenge—space defense—that they're not so well fitted for. If we both succeed, fine, since right now they're better defended than we are. Maybe in time they'll agree to wind down this competition.

So go to it, SDI, on the research front, and when and if a later President ever wants to deploy let's consider that question at that time. □

Richard Brookhiser

THEOCRACY IN AMERICA: CAMPAIGN '84 REVISITED

Who did He vote for?

How does one begin an investigation of the relations of religion and politics—specifically, of religion in America to American politics? There is always Tocqueville, that standing rebuke to journalists everywhere (who will be reading our reports 150 years from now?). Much of what he passed on to his French public is still pertinent; some of it, amusingly quaint: American clergymen, he noted, do not hold public office—"unless this term is applied to the functions which many of them fill in the schools. Almost all education is entrusted to the clergy." (Where was the ACLU?) For a more up-to-date look, one could do no better than examine the discussion of church and state which dominated the 1984 presidential campaign, during the month of September.

Presidential elections are the season in which politicians speak their minds. When there is a lull or (at the other extreme) the irresistible pressure of some great event, politicians may speak out on matters of constitutional or philosophic importance. The beginning of last fall was such a lull. Ronald Reagan's leads in the polls were brushing thirty percentage points. Everything Walter Mondale touched, meanwhile, turned to lead. He marched in a Labor Day parade in New York City; no one came. He addressed a crowd of students at USC; everyone booed. He was endorsed by John Anderson. The contest seemed headed for a rout (ultimately, it got there, though only after a few interesting twists in October).

In this calm, the candidates, and other prominent Americans, engaged as if by prior agreement in a cluster of inter-connected debates concerning religion and politics. They pressed the limits, sometimes bent them, and in the process, dabbled in political and moral science.

Religion had permeated the Democratic primary campaign. On the wild side, Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, and protégé of Jesse Jackson, enlivened things with a radio broadcast in which he called Judaism a "dirty religion." Once Jackson was out of the picture, Farrakhan was dismissed as a lunatic aberration (though he would exert an indirect influence later on). But more normal religions pervaded the political discussion of the mainstream. Jackson himself was a minister. Mondale was a minister's son, and Gary Hart a former divinity student; George McGovern was both. Reubin Askew was an elder of the Presbyterian Church. All the Democratic candidates used religious figures of speech and justifications

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Richard Brookhiser is senior editor at National Review. *This essay is adapted from his new book on the 1984 elections,* The Outside Story, *to be published later this year by Doubleday.*
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continually. McGovern invoked the Creator's perspective on the arms race. Mondale called nuclear weapons "godawful," and said that social injustice was a "sin." Geraldine Ferraro testified that she had been shaped by her faith.

Some of this was boilerplate. All politicians invoke God. Nelson Rockefeller's stenotypist developed an acronym, BOMFOG—for "the brotherhood of man, under the fatherhood of God"—because the phrase appeared so often in his speeches. But the Democrats' God-talk was not all ritual; it reflected an understanding of ethics and public policy. Some codes of human behavior, the Democrats believed and argued, flowed from the order of the universe; others didn't; they upheld the ones that did. Ronald Reagan, said Mario Cuomo in his keynote address to the San Francisco convention, practiced the ethics of Darwin; Democrats practiced the ethics of St. Francis of Assisi ("the first Democrat," Cuomo called him). It might be going too far to say that God was on the Democratic party's side. But He was on the side of their beliefs; in the political realm, they were on His side.

The Republicans, meanwhile, had done invoking of their own. One of their most controversial religious allies over the last years had been Rev. Jerry Falwell.

Falwell was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, of a mixed family—a violent, alcoholic father, a religious mother.[1] Falwell became a Christian in his twenties. He went to a Bible college in Missouri, then returned to Lynchburg in 1956 where he opened a church in an old bottling plant. A dozen years and two thousand members later, it had become the ninth largest church in the country.

As far as the country was concerned, it might as well have been on the moon. About the last America had heard of fundamentalism was Mencken's account of the Scopes trial, and such feeble re-tellings as *Inherit the Wind*. Since their defeat in Dayton, fundamentalists had been relegated to the category of invisible facts—things which perhaps exist, but, since no one thinks or talks about them, have no importance. Fundamentalism took its name from *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, a set of Biblical commentaries published in Los Angeles in the 1910s. As the tone of the title suggests, the movement was in retreat from the beginning. Other theologies had taken over the Protestant churches. Soon after the Scopes trial, fundamentalists retired from the public realm as well. "We have a message of redeeming grace through a crucified and risen Lord," preached Falwell in 1965, expressing the consensus fundamentalist view. "Preachers are not called to be politicians but soul-winners." The soul-winning message consisted of mysteries believed by orthodox Christians of all denominations—the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the virgin birth—as well as the arcana of Revelations, including graphic images of last things. "When the trumpet sounds," said Falwell in another sermon, "stark pandemonium will occur on . . . every highway in the world where Christians are caught away from the driver's wheel."

But what about the interval before the trumpet's blast? Falwell's 1965 sermon had been directed against liberal churchmen active in the civil rights movement. (Falwell at that time accepted segregation as Biblically sanctioned, and acknowledged later that it took a considerable mental wrench to overcome the mistake.) By the seventies, he had found issues of his own that he felt could not simply be left until the millennium. Mostly these were the so-called "social issues." Falwell's interest in next-to-last things was specifically triggered by *Roe* v. *Wade*. By 1976, he was declaring that "the idea that religion and politics don't mix was invented by the Devil to keep Christians from running their own country."

All politicians invoke God. Nelson Rockefeller's stenotypist developed an acronym, BOMFOG—or "the brotherhood of man, under the fatherhood of God"—because the phrase appeared so often in his speeches.

Falwell's formal political debut was arranged by the New Right. In 1979, a common acquaintance set up a meeting with Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, and Howard Phillips. Weyrich first spoke the phrase "moral majority" in passing, and thought it was too off-putting to be an effective title. But the others liked it. The Moral Majority, chartered that June, made a generalized, unsectarian pitch (no talk about Christians running their own country): against abortion, ERA, the gay rights movement, drugs, and pornography, and for a strong defense; in its own terms, pro-life, pro-family, pro-moral, and pro-American.

The phenomenon of the religious right went far beyond Falwell, who was not the only preacher who had gotten into politics. (He and his fellows, curiously, had built their national audiences through television—the supposed homogenizer, instead defining and distinguishing.) But the Moral Majority was the lightning rod. During the 1980 election, Falwell was routinely lumped with neo-Nazis and the Klan, and compared to Khomeini and Jim Jones. On his fundamentalist flank, meanwhile, he was condemned for "subtle ecumenicity." But Ronald Reagan took the religious right seriously. "I know that you can't endorse me," he told a rally of evangelicals in Dallas in August 1980, "but . . . I want you to know that I endorse you." So did many of that election's losers; "they beat my brains out," said one defeated pol, "with Christian love."

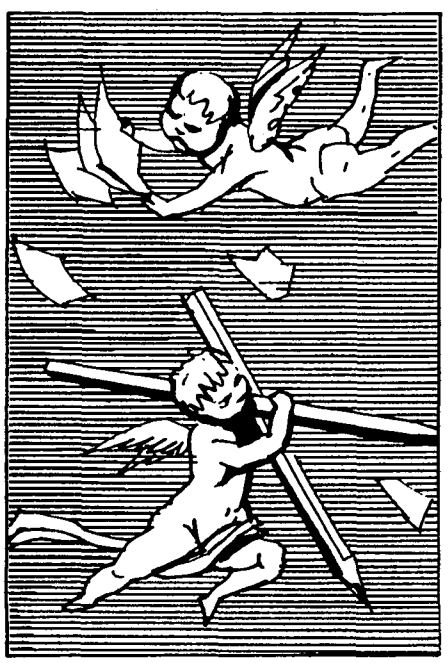
Four years later, as the post-convention campaign commenced, the new religious right found itself sharing the spotlight with that very old religious right, the Roman Catholic Church. Its right-wing days, many observers hoped (or feared), were long past. The Catholic Church's major political initiative in the Reagan Administration had been the American bishops' pastoral letter on nuclear war. The bishops' letter had a textual history as complicated as *Hamlet*: three shifting drafts, the third at the behest of the Vatican. Whatever its final meaning, it was taken, particularly in the early stages, as an ecclesiastical addendum to the freeze movement, with which it coincided. Many bishops, on their own, embraced pacifism explicitly; Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle called the Trident submarine the "Auschwitz of Puget Sound."

But the Catholic Church had also taken a political stand, for the last dozen years, against the legalization of abortion (a third of the Moral Majority's members, interestingly, were Catholics)—a continuity with its old right days, never abandoned. There was, moreover, an intrinsic asymmetry between the two positions. The pastoral letter on nuclear weapons, in all its incarnations, was long and complicated, and afflicted with the turgidity that darkens all Catholic official prose. It left to politicians the responsibility for deciding how best to achieve the ends it marked out as moral. The position on abortion, by contrast, was plain. The Catholic bishops stressed repeatedly that the two positions were both authoritative expressions of Catholic teaching. But in practical political terms, any American politician who was not an explicit warmonger—which is to say, any American politician—could find some way of putting himself on the right side of the pastoral letter. The abortion issue required other shifts.

The question arose in a particularly acute form with the selection of Mondale's running-mate. Geraldine Ferraro's congressional record was down the line pro-choice; she also was (and much was made of the fact) a Catholic: "very religious," said the governor of New Mexico at the San Francisco convention; shaped by her faith, she had said when she made her campaign debut with Mondale at his hometown of Elmore, Minnesota.

It was in Elmore that Ferraro tried out her first response. Pro-life picketers had been showing up for nearly every major Democratic event since the first TV debates. Some of their signs now had a personal angle. HEY FERRARO WHAT KIND OF CATHOLIC ARE

[1]Dinesh D'Souza's *Falwell: Before the Millennium* is the only biography that doesn't froth.



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YOU? Questioned about the protesters, Ferraro responded by questioning Reagan's religion. "The President walks around calling himself a good Christian and I don't for one minute believe it because the policies are so terribly unfair and they are discriminatory and they have hurt a lot of people."

Three days later, Mondale took up the attack. "My faith," he told an interviewer in Lake Tahoe, where he was resting up for the convention, "unmistakably has taught me that social justice is part of a Christian's responsibility. My upbringing taught me a sense of community." Reagan, who had had a similar small-town background, "would have to explain how he came to a different conclusion."

Attacking Reagan was all very well. But that still begged the question of a Catholic politician's responsibilities on the abortion issue. Mario Cuomo took it up next, directly.

He did so by taking on Archbishop (not yet Cardinal) John O'Connor of New York. Any Catholic, Cuomo said in an interview published in early August, who believed "literally" what O'Connor was saying, "can only vote for a right-to-lifer." O'Connor had indeed said something very like that, in a news conference two months earlier: "I don't see how a Catholic in good conscience can vote for a candidate who explicitly supports abortion." But this was before a Catholic who explicitly supported abortion had been put on a national ticket. O'Connor answered Cuomo's interview the day it was published with a demurral. "My sole responsibility is to present . . . the formal official teaching of the Catholic Church. I leave to those interested in such teachings" to judge how "the public statements of officeholders and candidates" match up. Cuomo professed himself "delighted" with O'Connor's clarification.

In Archbishop O'Connor, Cuomo had found an opponent worthy of his mettle. O'Connor had succeeded to Cardinal Cooke's place after a career as a Navy chaplain, in which he rose to the rank of rear admiral. Like Cuomo, he was personally unprepossessing: bespectacled, almost squirrelish in appearance; fussy in his enunciation, as if he had once overcome a slur. As with Cuomo, the appearance deceived. O'Connor was John Paul II's point man in the drafting of the nuclear arms pastoral letter, and in the American church generally. An intelligent Pope trusted his intelligence, and his orthodoxy. He was not going to be caught in any overt political interventions; he was also not about to let the faith be defined by random faithful.

Early in September, O'Connor bore in more directly. He criticized Ferraro by name for the first time, on doctrinal grounds, for having said "things about abortion relative to Catholic teaching which are not true. . . . I have absolutely nothing against Geraldine Ferraro; I will not tell anybody in the United States you should vote for or against" her "or anybody else." But "she has given the world to understand that Catholic teaching is divided on the subject of abortion" when in fact there was "no variance," "no flexibility," and "no leeway."

The September doldrums were perking up. Ferraro denied on the 10th that she had ever misrepresented her church, whereupon the archbishop produced evidence—a two-year-old letter, signed by her, inviting Catholic congressmen to a briefing by Catholics for Choice, a group of pro-abortion Catholics, who would "show . . . that the Catholic position on abortion is not monolithic."

Ferraro took cover in the ambiguity of the word "Catholic." The church's position on abortion, she conceded, after O'Connor produced her letter, was "monolithic." "But I do believe that there are a lot of Catholics who do not share the view of the Catholic Church." The Catholic position, in other words, equaled the position of Catholics; when in doubt, take a poll. She and O'Connor, she said on the 11th, had simply "agreed to disagree." "Religion," she added later, "has been injected into a presidential campaign. I have not welcomed it [certainly not since Elmore] and I do not want it to be an issue in this race."

"Secular humanism" was in fact a self-description, devised by secular humanists.

The fact was, Ferraro had been too out-front, both in her advocacy of abortion and her appeals to piety, simply to fudge the question, and she was not subtle enough to craft a convincing synthesis. But help was on the way. On September 13, Mario Cuomo was scheduled to deliver a talk to the theology department at Notre Dame. The very man who had sponsored St. Francis for membership in the Democratic party would set things right.

Cuomo presented himself to his audience as "an old-fashioned Catholic who sins, regrets, struggles, worries, gets confused and most of the time feels better after confession"; also as a lawyer and a politician. What was the right relation between his faith and his career? Cuomo suggested criteria in the form of questions. Is a religious belief "helpful? . . . essential to human dignity? Does it promote harmony? . . . Or does it divide us so fundamentally that it threatens our ability to function as a pluralistic society?"

Pluralism was the key; because of it, "public morality" in America "depend[ed] on a consensus view of right and wrong." Gauging the state of the consensus was "a matter of prudential political judgment." The way to the synthesis was now all clear.

"My wife and I," Cuomo stressed, "were enjoined never to use abortion to destroy the life we created, and we never have. . . . For me life or fetal life in the womb should be protected, even if five of nine justices of the Supreme Court disagree with me. . . . But not everyone in our society," he went on disarmingly, "agrees with me and Matilda." Cuomo the politician gave his read-out of the consensus: Anti-abortion laws were "not a plausible possibility" and "wouldn't work" anyway. "Given present attitudes, it would be Prohibition revisited, legislating what couldn't be enforced and in the process creating a disrespect for law in general." *Vox populi* was not *vox dei*; it might be the opposite. But in a democracy, it was the voice of necessity. Cuomo the politician bowed his head to it.

It was an attractive statement, far more so than any of Ferraro's. He hadn't entangled himself in disputes over the "Catholic position," and he had avoided the inconsistency of deprecating Reagan's Christianity in July, and complaining about religion in politics in September. There was only one weak spot. Consensus was the glue that held his position together. Who provided the consensus on abortion? Two hundred million Americans, ultimately. But wasn't Governor Mario Cuomo a prominent and respected one of them? When, before Notre Dame, had he made a resonant statement of his opinion of abortion? Whatever his pledges to God and Matilda, Cuomo, in his public life, had been "for" abortion, every bit as much as Ferraro. His politics and his judgment of the consensus coincided to a remarkable degree.

O'Connor answered him—not by name, though the sense of slow-motion debate was palpable—in an address to a Catholic medical group on October 18. It was a speech scored, in publicity terms, for full orchestra and brass band; Mother Teresa of Calcutta sat by the lectern as he spoke. He fingered the weak spot directly. "You have to uphold the law, the constitution says. It does not say that you must agree with the law, or that you cannot work to change the law. . . .

"There are those who argue that we cannot legislate morality. The reality is that we do legislate behavior every day. . . . It is obvious that law is not the entire answer to abortion. Nor is it the entire answer to theft, arson, child abuse, or shooting police officers. Everybody knows that. But who would suggest that we repeal the laws against such crimes because the law is so often broken?"

He exited the debate where he had first entered it. "I have the responsibility of spelling out . . . with accuracy and clarity what the Church officially teaches. . . . I recognize the dilemma confronted by some Catholics in political life. I cannot resolve that dilemma for them. As I see it, their disagreement, if they do disagree, is not simply with me" but "with the teaching of the Catholic Church."

While the Catholics curvetted, Protestants and Jews were not still. On August 24, the morning after his

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nomination, Ronald Reagan addressed an ecumenical prayer breakfast in Dallas. "I believe," he began, "that faith and religion play a critical role in the political life of our nation and always has [sic]." Reagan ran through mentions of God in American founding documents—the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, Washington's Farewell Address. "The truth is," he concluded, "politics and morality are inseparable. And as morality's foundation is religion, religion and politics are necessarily related." That was a plausible description of American history; an incontrovertible description of the opinions of the politicians involved in the 1984 campaign.

But in the middle of his speech, Reagan made a slightly different point. Reviewing the Court's school prayer decision, Reagan noted that there were those "fighting to make sure voluntary prayer is not returned to the classrooms. And the frustrating thing for the great majority of Americans who . . . understand the special importance of religion in the national life . . . is that those who are attacking religion claim they are doing it in the name of tolerance, freedom and open-mindedness. Question: Isn't the real truth that they are intolerant of religion?"

Reagan had isolated an anomalous, but real strain in American political life: the aggressive secularist. "Secular humanism" had become such a favorite buzz word of Falwell types that most people naturally assumed that they had coined it. It was, in fact, a self-description, devised by secular humanists. They represented a genuine, if marginal, American tradition: of Paine and Ingersoll; of the village atheist and the village crank. Their organs were gray magazines like the *Humanist* (Walter Mondale's brother Lester was on its editorial board), subsisting on anti-religious propaganda and exposés of ecclesiastical plots. ("Fundamentalists who collaborate with the Vatican are used by the Holy See to counter the best interests of the United States.") As an electoral force, they were nearly nil, but to the extent their ethos informed groups like the American Civil Liberties Union, they wielded disproportionate judicial clout. Of them, it could reasonably be said that they were "intolerant of religion."

Your opponents' most vulnerable allies are fair game. But there were other elements, not recognized by Reagan, in the opposition to school prayer. By far the smallest was authentic civil libertarians. Most supporters of absolutist interpretations of the Bill of Rights have ulterior motives; but there are a handful who sincerely revere it, in the same way that cargo cultists honor the DC-3: They don't know what it is for, or how it got there, but they know it is holy. (So sincere was Nat Hentoff in his devotion that he had begun to question abortion and infanticide on civil libertarian grounds.) The great majority of the prayer decision's supporters—the Walter Mondales, not the Lesters—simply saw it as a matter of pluralistic good housekeeping: The less we all try to believe together, the better we'll each believe by ourselves.

Falwell's "subtle ecumenicity" competed with alliances that Jewish liberals had made with entirely different parts of the gentile culture.

There were, finally, those concerned about school prayer and religion in politics generally who might be called aggressive theists: believers in one faith, suspicious of the encroachments of others. The line from the *Humanist*, quoted above, recalled good old-fashioned Protestant No Popery. It was kindred sentiments that Walter Mondale now tried to rouse.

He and Reagan both addressed a Washington convention of the B'nai B'rith service group on September 6. Mondale led off with a reply to the Dallas prayer breakfast. He denied that he was "intolerant of religion": "Never before" had he "had to defend my religious faith in a political campaign." Right; and he hadn't even attacked anyone else's since Lake Tahoe. But the bottom line of his speech was the threat of fundamentalists—a "determined band . . . reaching for government power to impose their own beliefs on others." Three days later, Senator Kennedy took up the same theme: the "intolerance which still flourishes at the extremist fringe of American politics . . . infects the very center of our national authority."

In his B'nai B'rith appearance, Reagan backed out of the fight he had picked; his advisers, solicitous of his September lead, would risk nothing that might disturb it. Mondale, however, did not back off. Falwell replaced James Watt as the demon of his and Ferraro's rhetoric all the way till November. If it was not a conscious attempt to alarm Jewish voters by waving fundamentalist hobgoblins, it gave a good impression of one.

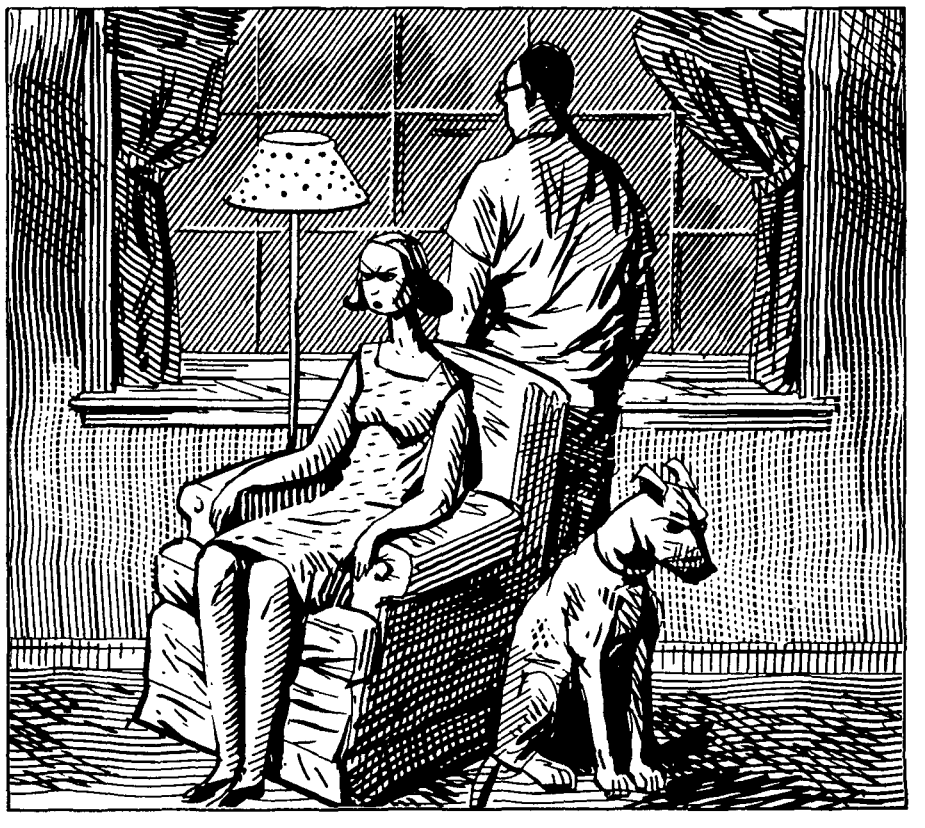
Falwell, it must be said, had given Jewish Americans reason to worry about him; not good reason maybe, but reason. He had carefully expunged the Christian-country language from his rhetoric. He was moreover a firm, not to say fanatical, supporter of Israel; Zionism was a pre-condition of membership in the Moral Majority. Menachem Begin had given him an award as a friend of the country. But, nonetheless, the talk had been there; and some of Falwell's fellow clerics were capable of odd statements. "In all due respect," one Rev. Bailey Smith had said in the midst of the 1980 campaign, "I do not believe that God hears the prayers of Jews." For weeks, the quotation was routinely attributed to Falwell, a fine example of unconscious editing: He *ought* to have said it; therefore, he must have.

And what kind of friend of Israel was he, anyway? Falwell's Zionism, like Begin's, was derived from Biblical exegesis. The existence of the State of Israel was a necessary precondition of his chiliastic scenarios. Sophisticates didn't like this at all ("mad," "bonkers," "rattle-brained tripe," ran a typical judgment). On the deepest level, Falwell inadvertently called attention to splits within the Jewish community itself. His Jewish allies—and there were a fair number—tended to be Orthodox, of deep hue. Falwell's "subtle ecumenicity" competed with alliances that Jewish liberals had made with entirely different parts of the gentile culture.

Mondale needed Falwell to undo the effects of his party's association, through Jesse Jackson, with Louis Farrakhan. The implied parallel was scurrilous. Falwell's social behavior was about as much like Farrakhan's as it was like Jim Jones's. Falwell had never written off whole religions as dirty. But his reputation was such that he might profitably be used to cancel out the memory of the Muslim. At least, Mondale was willing to try.

So the September debate broke off in partisan jockeying. What had been revealed? Nothing, maybe, more elevated than this: American politicians call in religion when it supports them; when it does not, they tend to talk about separation of church and state. They find their room to maneuver in the discontinuities of the American system. Some of these were built in from the first; others are later alterations. Church and state have been separate at the national level since the First Amendment. Religion and state, however, have never been divided. The American government, and its leaders, traditionally profess a reticent theism, which sees God as taking a special interest in America, and as the source of proper American ethics (whatever those are thought to be). Church and religion both, finally, play a lively role in American politics, limited by the restraints of decorum: It is okay to draft God for your side; less okay to point out His absence from the other side; not okay at all to call specific politicians God-less. The new, would-be tradition of the humanists—that religious forms and expressions must make no intrusion into the political realm whatsoever—can be called on by a politician who feels the heat of believers upon him; though to do so, one runs the risk of seeming to be a clumsy hypocrite, like Geraldine Ferraro.

Not Tocqueville; but it will do for starters. □



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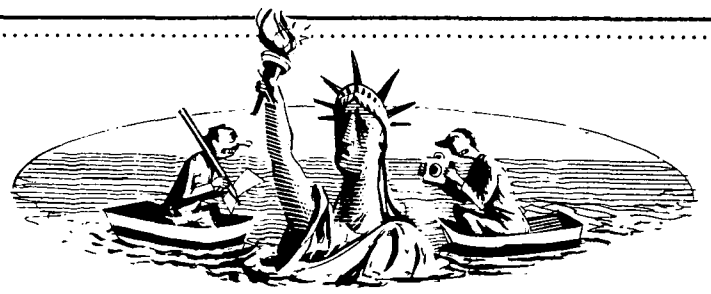
PRESSWATCH



RAPE IN THE NEW AGE

by John O'Sullivan

When Governor James Thompson of Illinois pronounced Gary Dotson guilty but popular in the Dotson-Webb rape case and released him from prison, the *Chicago Tribune* editorially reproved the entertainment industry for its unhealthy interest in the case. Despite the unsatisfactory matter of an inconclusive ending, Hollywood was taking an interest and a made-for-TV movie loomed. Would Dotson-Webb T-shirts be long delayed? "What began as a crime, real or fictional," it sniffed, "is becoming an industry."

The charge, usually leveled against "sensationalist" popular newspapers, is a familiar one. They blow up sex cases or crime stories out of all proportion to their real importance or social worth. Profound issues are unforgivably personalized. Unsavory aspects of life are highlighted. It is all very distressing, and an educated electorate deserves better, but because of the regrettable power of competition, stays away in droves when better is available. *O tempora, o mores*, oh dear.

Yet heavyweight, liberal, and plain old dull newspapers (they overlap considerably) exhibit a corresponding bias which receives much less attention. They tend to subordinate the personal and the particular to some broad social theorizing of a high-minded (and usually progressive) tendency. It is as if such newspapers were written by people whose history teachers told them very firmly that history was made not by great men but by Movements and Trends and Ideas—with people like Napoleon and Hitler playing the role of ventriloquist's dummy. By a curious coincidence, this bias in favor of general ideas colored much of the reporting and more of the comment in the Dotson-Webb case.

Mr. Dotson, as the world now knows, was sentenced six years ago to 25-50 years in prison for the rape of Catherine Crowell. Miss Crowell subsequently married a Mr. Webb and was later converted to a traditional form of Christianity. As she now tells the story, she had given false witness against Mr. Dotson and, upon conversion, her conscience naturally troubled her. Her clergyman was consulted and advised that she had a moral duty to set free an innocent man by telling the truth. Since Mrs. Webb could not even recall the defendant's surname, she obtained the help of a local Wisconsin lawyer who contacted a Chicago TV station, WLS-TV. Its assignment editor tracked down Mr. Dotson's sister and broke the news that her brother's accuser had recanted. She broke down and cried, as subsequently did Mr. Dotson's mother.

WLS-TV ran the story on a late news program on March 21. Two days later, the local Chicago press picked it up. The *Sun-Times*, probably downgrading an important item about Senate budget deficit manuevers or an announcement by the Federal Aeronautics Administration, ran the story on page one. But the *Tribune*, resisting the temptation to be interesting, relegated it to page five.

And in the following days, the *Tribune* maintained this reserve. In the dry neutralist language that schools of journalism have inculcated as proper journalistic style in impressionable youngsters, it presented such aspects of the story as the state prosecutor's view of Mrs. Webb. "Sources close to the investigation say authorities remain unconvinced," it revealed breathlessly, "because the woman is associated with a religious cult and living in 'an emotionally charged atmosphere.' " Wow. What the paper plainly wanted to convey was the prosecutor's view that Mrs. Webb was bonkers and so no one could believe a word she said. But its principled addiction to bureaucratese got in the way of this simple message, which was a good thing since the cult to which Mrs. Webb, like about 40 million other Americans, belongs is the Baptist Church. And to be cool, calm, and collected when withdrawing a rape accusation against a man who had served six years for it would be somewhat better evidence of barminess than heightened emotion. So, if you have ever wondered what disinformation is, well, that little item was disinformation.

When on March 27 Mr. Dotson held a press conference, again the *Sun-Times* put it on page one, and again the sober *Tribune*, refusing to get excited, thought that the local "Chicagoland" section was the appropriate grave. But since Mrs. Webb appeared on "Good Morning, America" and "The Today Show" on March 20, the story had by then escaped from Chicagoland and headed for the big time.

Let us now pause and reflect on the nature of the story. It is extraordinarily interesting on two counts. As human interest journalism, it is, well, sensational. A young man is falsely accused, he serves six years of a twenty-five-year sentence, then his accuser experiences a religious conversion, struggles morally with herself to do the right thing, repents, and finally confesses her lie to the world, whereupon the innocent man forgives her! It is a pity that the two central characters did not actually hug each other when urged to do so by the beautiful Miss Phyllis George on CBS's morning television news. It would have provided the ideal fadeout shot. But one can hardly blame Hollywood for having its interest piqued. In the sad absence of Joan Crawford and Henry Fonda, I should suggest Faye Dunaway as Catherine Webb and Dustin Hoffman in the Dotson role. Hire the guy who wrote *Call Northside 777*, book your hotel room for the next Academy Awards—and count your Oscars. In regarding the Dotson-Webb case as first-class soap opera, the entertainment industry and the pop press were being true to themselves and to the story. There was nothing inauthentic in their responses to it.

But the case was surely no less interesting as a social issue. Here is the ultimate liberal nightmare: a person sentenced to long imprisonment for a crime he did not commit. Admittedly, it would have produced a much more agreeable *frisson* if he had actually been executed for the crime. The name of Dotson might then be celebrated in folk song and abstract verse. Nonetheless, even a live Dotson could be a perfectly serviceable symbol of the system's cruelty. The indignant questions ask themselves: How had this miscarriage of justice occurred? Why had a poor youth, from a deprived background, been railroaded into a fifty-year sentence? Who or what was

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responsible for this crime—the legal establishment? Ronald Reagan? the climate of fear? the new McCarthyism? Such were the themes that I expected to come piping from a thousand liberal voices. Yet the paladins of the liberal press, upon hearing the news, shuffled their feet uncomfortably, coughed behind their hands, and looked fiercely into the middle distance.

On March 30, when most papers commented on the case, the *New York Times* editorial page was firmly silent. On March 31, it gave voice. An editorial on the topic of rape, stimulated by a Justice Department report, regretted that many women did not bring rape accusations to the police because they feared callous treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system. The names of Dotson and Webb did not disturb the course of these general reflections.

An editorial in the *New York Daily News* on March 30 did deal with the Dotson-Webb case. It detected two tragedies therein. The first was the injustice to Dotson. The second was a more hypothetical tragedy: namely, that the injustice to Dotson would "be used by people who are already hostile to rape victims to prevent their coming forward." But who were these people? They would have to be very odd indeed to be filled with hostility toward the *victims* of a peculiarly vicious and violent crime. The editorial answered this question later: "Too many police officers and prosecutors tend to doubt rape victims. . . . Too many judges are letting convicted rapists off with lenient sentences."

Here, then, is the explanation of the initial liberal reluctance to rally to Dotson's standard. Rape has become politicized. It used to be something as obvious as a vile crime which all decent people plainly abhorred. It is now a liberal cause. Liberals see rape victims as facing not just the assaults of rapists but also discrimination at the hands of hostile police, prosecutors, and judges who are, in the official lingo, mainly white, male, and middle class. What is going on here?

The answer is that a feminist theory of rape, itself too extreme to be accepted in its pure version by any but the terminally ideological, has entered the liberal mind in a diluted form. In Susan Brownmiller's raw, untreated formulation: All men are rapists. In the more circumspect variety, men have an ineradicable minimum of sympathy for the rapist. Without realizing it, they share the rapist's aggressive instincts when it comes to sexuality. They are more sympathetic to excuses on the lines of "she asked for it." They cannot appreciate that rape is such a dreadful experience that no woman would ever fabricate a rape charge if it meant facing the ordeal of cross-examination. To question a rape accusation, then, is to reveal this disguised masculine sympathy for the rapist and thus hostility to the rape victim.

But the awkward thing is that doubting accusations of all kinds is the function of police and prosecutors initially, of judges and juries subsequently. Police and prosecutors must satisfy themselves that a crime has been committed—and by the person accused. Judges and juries must doubt the accused's guilt—this is called the defendant's presumption of innocence. In the past, the questioning of rape victims was probably overly harsh and insensitive and did not take sufficient account of their recent ordeal. As the first *Times* editorial accepted, that has now been changed. But for many feminists, sensitivity is not enough. They seek to establish a climate of opinion in which it is assumed that women simply do not bring false rape accusations. Rape crisis centers are adamant in insisting that such false charges are so rare as not to be worth bothering about. In effect, they want the presumption of innocence aban-

(continued on page 46)

We're All Special People

Every month of every year, every newspaper, every politician, every TV reporter will sound off about "special interests" and their influence on government.

Who are these special interests? They're small organized groups whose lobbyists can be seen scurrying about Washington and the state capitols seeking chunks of government support for their people.

The lobbyists argue that aid to these groups—like the elderly, farmers, minorities, the military, certain industries, education, and so on—is in the national interest. More important to the lawmakers, getting the votes of these groups is in their interests.

As aid to each of these groups increases, so does the federal budget. And so does the tax burden on one very special interest group—hardworking Americans like you. In 1930, for example, the federal, state and local tax bite was less than one hour's wages per day. But by 1982, you worked almost three hours every day to pay your taxes.

No single special interest group is to blame for this crushing tax burden. Two billion dollars in aid to unemployed buggy-whip workers would cost each taxpayer less than a penny an hour. But add up the hundreds of such spending programs and it's obvious that taxpayers are being nickle-and-dimed to death.

How do we end this nightmare? Perhaps a freeze on federal spending is the answer. As it stands now, few Congressmen have the courage to risk offending the interest groups—and being voted out of office. A limited budget might help Congress to say no when it's necessary.

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AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS

PILGRIMS FROM THE HEARTLAND

by Joan Frawley

The wind whips up the dust on the road and tousles Sister Mary Hartman's iron-gray hair as she describes the unique qualities of the Sandinista government's model prison farms. At the *granja* we're about to inspect, an inmate is an "intern," not a "prisoner." The distinction, she implies, reflects the government's subtle effort to mold new men for the new Nicaragua. She asks that visitors "demonstrate sensitivity" by not asking interns why they've been imprisoned, "or anything else about their pasts, which they have put behind them."

Sister Hartman's audience consists mostly of Minnesotans on a "travel seminar" organized by the Minneapolis-based Center for Global Service and Education, and sponsored by the World Hunger Task Force of the Lutheran Church of America's Minnesota Synod and the Lutheran Social Ministry of Arizona. There are twenty of us: a Lutheran bishop, a handful of other Protestant pastors, a Catholic deacon, several social workers, as well as a tire dealer, a theologian, a real estate saleswoman, a retired painting contractor, and a university professor who hopes to lead a bicycle tour of the country.

Like many recent visitors to Nicaragua, our group traveled as pilgrims rather than tourists. Compared with most of the 17,000 U.S. citizens who have surfaced in Managua since 1979 we were stodgily mainstream, reflecting the Lutheran Church's liberal, not to say radical, politics. Depending on his daring and politics, the traveler to Nicaragua can participate in a voluntary work brigade and pick cotton or coffee, go to the Honduran border and protest U.S. aggression, take Spanish and political education classes; or he can simply meet with government officials, church and development organizations, and opposition groups. Our group chose the latter route. It limited exposure to Third World elements but guaranteed plenty of photo opportunities and statistics to beef up parish slide shows, testimonials, and visits to congressional district offices.

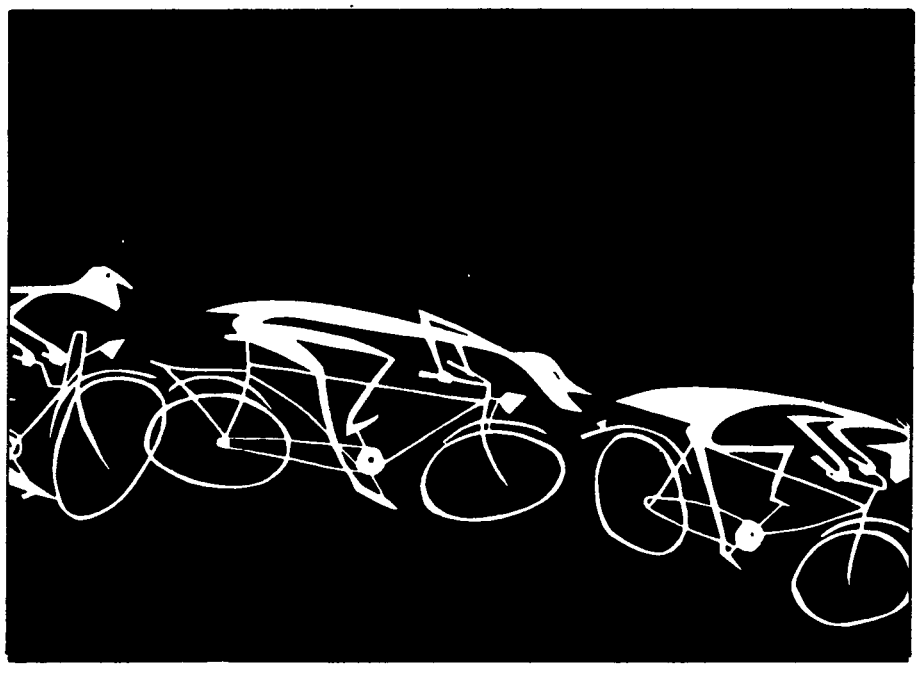
By the time we met Sister Hartman we had already spent a week in Cuernavaca, Mexico and San Salvador, El Salvador. There, according to our tour literature, we observed "the reality of poverty and injustice in Latin America" and examined its "root causes" through interviews with human rights groups, peasants, liberation theologians, and government spokesmen. During our regular "reflection" periods, we "shared feelings" about political and economic options for the region's ills. Under a sunny Cuernavaca sky, we made crayon drawings which expressed our frustration with Mexico's static poverty and our guilt over U.S. hemispheric dominance.

The first week's program encouraged a sense of optimism as we anticipated our final stop in Managua. Could our questions about poverty and injustice be resolved in our imminent confrontation with the Sandinista revolution?

Wednesday: Our initiation into the revolutionary process begins at the program's Managua residence with a slide show on the government's health reforms. Delivered by a burly woman from the government's Center of Information and Accessory Services for Health, the presentation provides us with statistics on the inadequacy of Anastasio Somoza's social programs and the subsequent liberality of the Sandinistas' free health care. Although physicians and medicines are still in short supply, the woman says, that does not lessen the importance of the government's ideological support for health rights: The Sandinistas "declared that health is a right of everybody, that health is a responsibility of the government with the people's organizations."

The slides document the health *brigadistas'* unusual and rudimentary approach to preventive medicine, which seems to attest to the revolution's benign, homegrown origins. One slide depicts a young *brigadista* writhing on the floor, simulating the painful effects of a tropical malady. Afterwards, someone asks our speaker whether the *brigadistas* receive any political education. "The *brigadistas* are too busy for much classroom work," she brusquely replies. "But naturally, they know the political reasons for malaria and other diseases."

That afternoon, we take a brief walking tour through our neighborhood. Several blocks down, we encounter a few dilapidated barrio dwellings, similar to the ones we'd deplored in Mexico and Salvador. Now, responding to our guide's enthusiasm, we almost feel the shacks' allure of revolutionary austerity, defiant in the face of the U.S.-inspired dependency that plagues the region. We have not been here for twenty-four hours and already we sense that the Sandinistas' achievements must be measured by different, perhaps metaphysical, standards.



In the evening, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, the program's co-director, offers a lecture on the Sandinistas' economic policies. The former national coordinator of the Politics for Food Program with Clergy and Laity Concerned, Nelson is the author of *Hunger for Justice: The Politics of Food and Faith*. His lecture begins on the right foot with a short history of failed U.S. economic and military initiatives in the region. We scribble down statistics on the extent of Somoza's greed. But as the figures documenting the Sandinista government's subsequent largesse are displayed on the blackboard, the audience grows restive. There's something screwy about the agrarian reform numbers.

These Minnesotans understand land; some spent their youth on family farms. Now, they're hearing four assertions about the Sandinista reforms that don't add up: first, that the Sandinistas have inherited 21 percent of the land from Somoza and his cronies; second, that the revolution has launched a moderate land reform program that respects economic pluralism and does not unfairly expropriate any property; third, that it has distributed land titles to 40,000 families; and fourth, that the government still owns 18 percent of the land. How can the government create so many new land owners by relinquishing only 3 percent? Jack Nelson doesn't know.

Thursday: With Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer, the program's co-director,

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Joan Frawley reports on Central America for the National Catholic Register.

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and a Sandinista union representative who serves as our guide, we explore a state-owned textile factory visited weekly by tour groups. Sara presents a decidedly cheerful interpretation of government policies. As we inspect the factory, which primarily produces underwear for the armed forces, she blithely repeats our guide's endorsement of the advances that the state-controlled unions have made in labor relations. Industrial strikes are unnecessary now as unions and management work with a common purpose. Our guide senses a residue of disbelief, and urges us to talk informally with the workers for confirmation. No one in the group speaks much Spanish, so our guide turns to a nearby seamstress. Someone asks if the seamstress gets paid according to the piecework she completes. The woman acknowledges that her paycheck does reflect her productivity. But that is not why she works so hard. "I do it for the state," she says.

The factory inspection's upbeat tone is not sustained during a meeting at the independent (non-government) Permanent Human Rights Commission. Though our tour literature promised a balanced series of encounters with both Sandinista representatives and opposition groups, this is one of the few exceptions to the pro-FSLN drumbeat we hear repeated throughout our stay. Indeed, the commission's representative seems to be the gatekeeper to an entirely different world. He carefully outlines government human rights violations: torture, political prisoners, censorship, and religious persecution. His approach excludes the emotional outbursts and political appeals that typify most human rights presentations on our tour.

Before, we had been prepped on the correct interpretation of opposition viewpoints. But this time our program directors, immersed in the revolutionary process, have forgotten to prepare us for the confrontation with the other Nicaragua: the Sandinista mobs, the house-to-house searches for draft dodgers, the harassment of dissenters. The interview serves as one of our few opportunities to taste the revolution's bitter fruits. We can't help noting Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer's sour expression as she translates the commission's figures.

"Do you think she's translating his words correctly, or do you think she's toning it down?" one of the pastors whispers. Like most of his colleagues, he came to the country with a tolerance for bold, young revolutions. Yet, Sara's obvious bias chafes against his sense of fair play, and the rumor about her devious translating spreads.

The brash, prophetic style of Sister Mary Hartman restores us to the official version of Nicaraguan life. A representative of the government human rights commission, Sister Hartman attacks the independent commission as a nest of counterrevolutionaries and insists there are not over 2,000 political prisoners, as the commission reported, but a mere 300 or so—mostly ex-national guardsmen.

She admits that some Nicaraguans, like Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, are unhappy with the revolution, but that's because they don't live the Gospel and so can't adjust to the new Nicaragua. "Sharing isn't easy," she explains. "It requires conversion." A bit later she condemns U.S. aid to the contras. America, she says, is like "Germany in the thirties. We're learning to torture the central nervous system."

Most of us stop taking notes. The Catholic deacon, a member of the pacifist Catholic Worker movement, leans over and whispers, "Where do I join the contras?" As we head for the door, the lanky Lutheran theologian pauses to note my Catholicity and remark, "Just remember she's one of yours."

Friday: The program directors have heard the grumblings about the tour's pro-government militancy and they want to share feelings. In the end, they promise to dampen their revolutionary passions and we promise to curb our nasty remarks about their ideological commitments. But our litany of complaints continues.

When we ask about the food shortages or the expulsion of the ten foreign priests, they insist ultimate blame lies with the U.S., not the Sandinistas. When we ask why the FSLN acronym appears in the title of most government agencies and the popular militias, they explain that the label does not suggest party control, but patriotism. The Sandinista Defense Committees, the network of neighborhood political organizations, officially called the "eyes and ears of the revolution," are compared with U.S. crime-watch groups.

The lack of balance irks even our group's firm Sandinista supporters. "When I get back home and talk about the issues, conservatives are going to ask about the problems here and I've got to have some answers," gripes the university professor, who has put aside his bicycle tour plans after observing the country's mountainous terrain.

In the afternoon we drive to the U.S. Embassy. The harried consular official who paces in front of us provides only a perfunctory explanation for the Reagan Administration's opposition to the regime. The few arguments he does offer are neutralized during a subsequent interview with a handsome, articulate FSLN spokesman. He insists that U.S. aggression, not Marxist ideology, is to blame for such political controls as the "burden" of censorship.

Saturday: Early in the morning we set off for the city of Leon. We have been promised an interview with a leather factory owner who will testify on behalf of the country's pluralistic economy. The factory produces 40 percent of the country's leather; 20 percent of its production is devoted to combat boots. The factory owner says he has no problems with the government, though he knows foreign aggression may force the regime to take complete control over the means of production. "Just like you did in World War II," he says.

But our program directors have not

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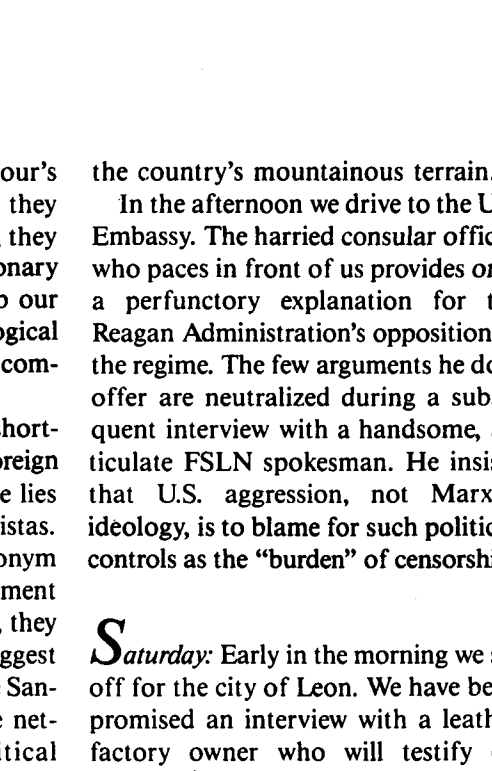

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not accompanied us to Leon. Without their careful guidance, the testimony on economic pluralism begins to unravel. While the businessman makes his case, his young U.S.-educated son stands by. Clad in tight designer jeans, aviator glasses clipped onto his Lacoste T-shirt, the son smirks at the irony of his father's tolerance for the government's strict controls. Finally, the older man admits, "The educated people, the bourgeoisie, are constantly threatened as a class." Then the son pipes up. "The army is the new class. They are not well-educated, but they are powerful."

In Leon, these remarks are the closest we come to the gritty facts of real people's lives. Then it's back to a presentation on post-revolutionary day-care, followed by refreshments at a former "bourgeois social club" rehabilitated into a "revolutionary discotheque," and lunch at a restaurant cooperative run by reformed prostitutes.

A late afternoon meeting with pro-government Christian community leaders does little to lift our spirits. "We volunteer to pick cotton, to join the militias, to work in the Sandinista Defense Committees," says one of the middle-class Christian leaders, "because we believe we must offer an example, and because we see the revolution is addressing the problems of the poor."

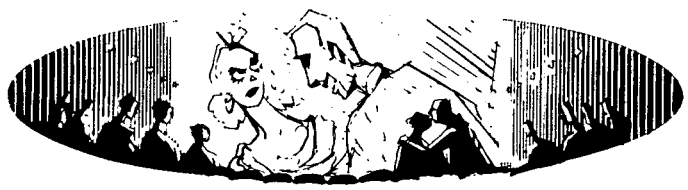
But these Christians' strict adherence to Sandinista doctrine raises suspicions about their commitment to social justice. Our doubts are confirmed when we search for the bathroom and chance upon the servants' squalid living quarters.

Sunday: Today we attend a Catholic church service which Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer describes as a "*campesino* mass without any *campesinos.*" Murals depicting the FSLN flag and the party's founder, Carlos Fonseca, decorate the church wall. The priest who celebrates the mass is the unofficial leader of the pro-government "popular church." "We must ask," he tells his primarily foreign audience of Americans and Europeans, "how do we become new people through the revolution and new people through Christ?" During the homily's "dialogue" session, U.S. cotton and coffee *brigadistas* troop to the microphone and express their enthusiasm for the revolutionary process. We sit in our pews and wait for the signal that we'll depart for our dinner at a local restaurant.

Our contingent doesn't belong among these fervent believers; we won't advance this tropical revolution as a prophetic model for its Latin neighbors. But we soon discover that our peculiar reaction will have no impact on our tour's Minnesota headquarters. There the machinery for channeling newly inspired activism remains solidly in place, and will not soon be dislodged by a few hardened skeptics.

Just over a month after our return, the "travel seminar alumni" mailings begin. Most urge lobbying at congressional district offices and participation in protests against the renewal of covert aid. One letter remarks: "We have had special insight into the struggle and hope in Central America. A message many of us return with is to 'tell the people and the government of the United States what you saw.' This is the time to do it." □

THE TALKIES



TWENTY YEARS TOO LATE

by John Podhoretz

It has long been a matter of discussion why Hollywood hasn't made more movies about Vietnam. The answer is simple: We lost, and a war movie about defeat is not something anybody wants to see. The war movie is one of Hollywood's traditional pay-dirt box-office winners, and each war has its own kind of movie with its own kind of plot, made and remade and remade still again. The generic World War II movie, for example, is about a small band of men, from almost every conceivable ethnic group, battling what always appeared to be a better-armed, smarter, and terrifying enemy, and winning anyway.

So when Hollywood wanted to make a generic Vietnam war movie, it had to figure out just how to do it without getting bogged down in a defeat. And, with its typical ingenuity, Hollywood came up with a solution: It just requires our going back to Indochina in the 1980s and fighting the war over again, on a small scale to be sure, and getting it right for once.

This brilliant gambit is most powerfully demonstrated by an excrescence called *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, a hilariously lamebrained and preposterous Sylvester Stallone vehicle that improves on most other Stallone vehicles by keeping Sylvester's mouth almost entirely shut and his pectorals almost constantly flexing.

As I write, *Rambo* is raking in about $25 million a week across the country, and should it continue at this pace it will end up as one of the most successful movies ever made. It is the fourth movie in three years to feature a story about a Vietnam veteran going back to Indochina to bring back some of those still listed as "missing in action."

The first, *Uncommon Valor*, was released at Christmastime 1983 with almost no publicity and starring only Gene Hackman, who is far from a box-office draw these days. Much to the wonderment of everyone in Hollywood, *Uncommon Valor* was the third-largest hit of the season, making $70 million at the box office. In the spring of 1984, Chuck Norris's *Missing in Action* also proved to be a surprise monster hit, occasioning an extraordinarily rapid sequel, *MIA II*, in December 1984.

Their plots are almost identical, based largely on the exploits of former Green Beret Col. Bo Gritz, who led a widely publicized hunt through Laos for MIAs and POWs in 1981. The events of each movie are telegraphed at the beginning, and thus are rather predictable: Men tramp through the jungle, find a small crew of MIAs in prisoner-of-war camps, fight their way out, and get them home. The moving and beautifully acted *Uncommon Valor* is far and away the best of the four, so it is not as if people were going to see these movies for the novelty. What they like is the familiarity. Far from being terrified of "another Vietnam," audiences seem to relish the sight of Americans back in Indochina correcting their past mistake. And that mistake was not involvement, it was *defeat.*

"Sir, do we get to win this time?" These are Rambo's words at the beginning of the movie, and they are the film's most important. We find Rambo on a chain gang, where he has been sent because of the transgressions he committed in *First Blood*, the 1982 movie to which *Rambo* is the sequel. *First Blood* had the Special Forces veteran wandering aimlessly through America and getting mistreated and roughed up by the populace of a small northwestern town. Finally, Rambo decides that he has had enough, and brings to bear on the town all of the skills he perfected in the jungles of Vietnam. By film's end, the town is a wreck, Rambo has made a passionate speech to his former C.O. about how badly Americans have treated the Vietnam veterans, and is, Christlike, sent to jail for their sins.

In *Rambo*, his C.O. has come to spring him from jail to go back to Vietnam and do reconnaissance. He is only to go in from their base of operations in Thailand, take photographs, and get out. Public opinion (possibly generated by *Uncommon Valor* and *Missing in Action*, though this is left unstated) has demanded a complete accounting of our soldiers.

But though public opinion demands answers, Washington wants the issue to die completely. The evil bureaucrat in charge of the operation explains it to Rambo's C.O.: "Do you really want us to open that wound again?" So when Rambo (who has lost his camera in a mild *contretemps* with some pirates) takes one of the MIAs out of the camp

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he has visited as evidence and proceeds with him to the point where he is to be picked up by helicopter, the bureaucrat tells the helicopter pilots not to land.

It is a powerful scene: Rambo shouting at the helicopter "Don't leave us here," the soldiers from the camp advancing upon them, the rickety, gangrenous MIA watching helplessly as his nation abandons him again in a cruel land.

Rambo is taken back to the camp and, significantly, is interrogated not by a Vietnamese, but by a Russian general. The Russian, played by Steven Berkoff in the most hilariously overdone villain performance since Richard Lee's nasty "Jap" in every World War II film, tortures the magnificent Stallone body and threatens to stick a red-hot piece of iron in the MIA's eye unless Rambo gets on the radio and announces to the world that he is an American spy.

Rambo agrees, and wires Thailand. He asks to speak to the nasty bureaucrat. "I'm coming for you," he says, the camera in a tight closeup of his mouth. He then beats up the Russian and everybody else, gets all the MIAs, commandeers a helicopter, destroys a Russian helicopter gunboat, and proceeds back to base.

Upon arrival, Rambo destroys the fancy monitoring equipment at the base, beats up the bureaucrat, and lunges at him with a knife, implanting it finally not in the bureaucrat's chest, but right next to his head.

His C.O. joins him on the tarmac. "Where are you going, Johnny?" the C.O. asks. "I don't know," Rambo replies. The C.O. suggests he return to America and what will almost certainly be a full presidential pardon. Rambo only shakes his head.

"Don't you love your country?" the C.O. asks.

"I'd die for my country," Rambo replies. Then, almost turning toward the camera and directing his words to the audience, he speaks for every Vietnam veteran. "We only want our country to love us as much as we love it." And with that, he walks into the Thai sunset, whence he will presumably be returned for *First Blood Part III.*

When Stallone made *First Blood*, Rambo's impassioned speech about the troubles of being a Vet was quite dramatic and stark; it was, in fact, the first time such a speech was made on screen. Now, three years later, it sounds almost like self-pity. Everybody loves the Vietnam veterans these days, and though no apologies have really been given to them for the years in which they were treated shabbily, even those who once denounced them can be heard sighing over Agent Orange or post-traumatic syndrome.

That has been the signal contribution of these four movies. Bad as all but *Uncommon Valor* are, they tell us something about the American people and the Vietnam war.

And that is that the serious debate over the Vietnam war is now over. The debate began in earnest only after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Before then, those responsible for prosecuting the war never gave anyone a good reason for supporting it, while most of those responsible for coming up with policy, and writing about policy, had spent eleven years offering millions of reasons, some good, a lot bad, for opposing it. Only when the catastrophic and monstrous behavior of the Communist regimes in Vietnam and Cambodia quieted some of the more vociferous voices on the left, and gave some leeway to nervous voices on the right, did the discussion really begin.

The ruling is now in, as the hundreds of millions of dollars spent at the box office and the videocassette store on these movies now attest. If we were going to go in at all, we should have fought to win. And the tragedy is that had they made movies like this during the Johnson Administration (John Wayne's silly *Green Berets* doesn't count), perhaps those responsible for selling the war to the American people would have had enough confidence to make the case that was eventually made by the deaths of three million Indochinese. □

THE GREAT IRISH SALOON SERIES

BRADY'S OF MAYNOOTH

by William McGurn

In an age whose dismal hallmark is an almost universal decline in standards, decent American men and women do not need to be reminded what this has meant to the Republic's saloons. Those valiant holdouts from the ferns-and-lite-beer ethos grow fewer with every passing day, and decades from now scholars doubtless will link the phenomenon with the general enervating of America.

Theology, however, counsels that the only unforgivable sin is despair, and as usual even in these sorry times we are not without some measure of hope. For at the westernmost extremity of Europe, the same green isle that kept learning alive during the continent's Dark Ages has kept the lamp lit in our own. True, Ireland recently legalized contraception and is working on divorce, people whose older siblings were weaned on fish-and-chips now congregate at McDonald's or Burger King, and the island's hierarchy has chimed in the general chorus of ecclesiastical babblings about Central America. Against this mounting clamor of foolishness, the Irish countryside has thrown up its one faithful soul, the noble publican.

The Church falters, the Commonwealth crumbles, but by and large this man has barred the worst elements of our wretched century from his domain. Under his patient eye the daily needs of the Irishman are sorted out in a manner well befitting the appellation public house: Here local news is reported and digested; loans extended and repaid; brawls instigated and put down; business deals struck; elections fixed; urgent messages deposited; matches arranged; the human appetite for companionship and song satiated. A refuge from the demands of a nagging wife and the ever-expanding State (much the same thing these days), the Irish public house remains a standard of normalcy in a most unnatural world.

Though my own brief existence here on earth has been marked by innumerable errors in judgment, I was at least fortunate that my initiation to the world of saloonery was consummated in a place of suitable taste and refinement. This establishment goes by the honest name of "Brady's" and is located in the County Kildare village of Maynooth, a miserable hour's bus-ride on the Number 66 from Dublin. At the time of my introduction, I and several other American expats were registered at the local university, primarily known for its seminary, the country's largest. So whatever wisdom was imparted to us during that formative year we owe less to the classroom than to our more informal academic pursuits at Brady's. To our surprise we learned that there in fact existed a Brady behind the name—Phillip Brady—who with his wife and family have been servicing the town of Maynooth for more than half a century.

The untrained eye, it must be said, would grant Brady's nary a second glance. Ordinary by even ordinary standards, in its structure and ethos it is any bar anywhere in Ireland. Upstairs can be found the modest Brady residence; downstairs there are both the traditional Irish lounge (where women are tolerated) and bar (where they are not). There is in addition a small, somewhat hidden room where the select few might gather to enjoy their beverages after hours without upsetting the local constabulary.

As there were women in our group, most of our business was conducted in the lounge, our coats piled up high in front of the large window. Cramped together on tan vinyl couches of dubious design and no comfort, we would take our drink and talk, a turf

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fire burning in the winter months to keep out the chill. Perhaps the most cherished furnishing of this room was the yellowed lithograph that still hangs beside the entrance, in a frame that can be turned upside-down: Right-side up carries the label "courtship" and shows a man and woman smiling at each other; inverted, the expressions on the faces turn to snarls. Labeled "marriage," this is the position in which the picture usually rests.

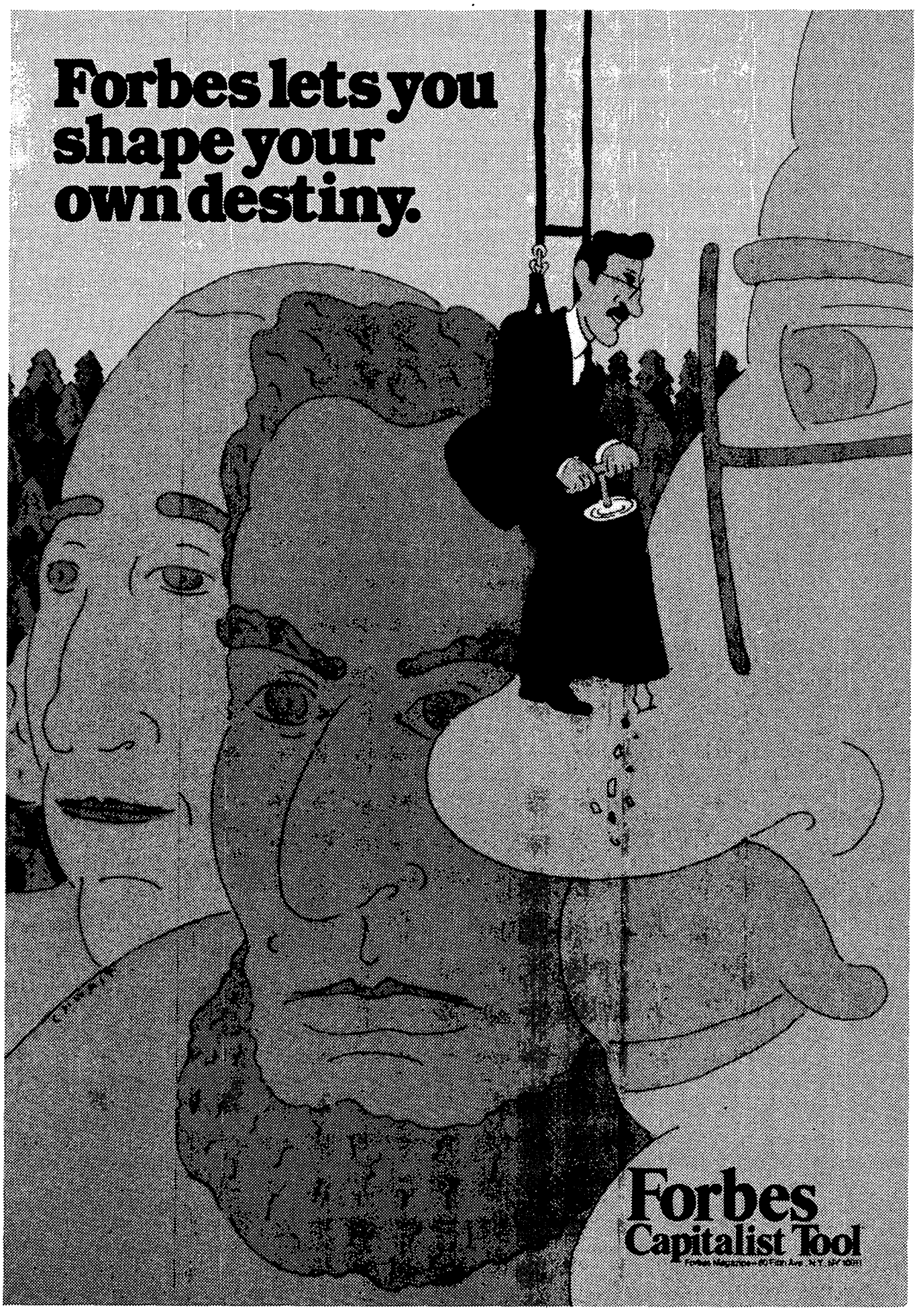
In the lounge, too, there occurred one of the more notable disturbances of our stay. This was the time the resident artist and faithful patron, Vinnie Doyle, was commissioned to extend his artistic powers to the large mirror that covered most of the back wall. According to the terms of the agreement, Vinnie was to be supplied with free drink for the duration of said project; under this arrangement, work quite naturally dragged on for days, with people popping in and out every hour or so each day to check on his progress and offer their critiques. When finally the scaffolding was removed and the result of his labors unveiled—a Toulouse-Lautrec-like dance-hall scene—Mrs. Brady adjudged the work obscene and banished Vinnie from the premises for life. A few days later he could be observed there in defiance of the ban, but he kept to the shadows lest he arouse Mrs. Brady's ire.

In such dealings Brady's proved itself to be like any fine saloon; in a word, a family, with a truer ring to it than the big happy cliché. The Brady's alone included Mr., Mrs., Rose, and Noel; there were as well innumerable patrons who spent more time there than in their own homes and thought of themselves as having fraternal rights. Then there was Lodger, usually soliciting a drink from whoever happened to be around; Peter, who played dominoes with the women on Wednesday nights; rumpled Art O'Duffy, who spoke Gaelic and was the house balladeer; Vinnie, of course; not to mention some more surly types, a fair representative being the meat-cutter who one evening voiced a strong objection to the current arrangement of my face. With all this variety Brady's was without doubt big, and for the same reason it was impossible to describe it as always happy. This is what is meant by family.

It's going on a decade now since I first poked a tentative head through Brady's black wooden doors, and each new visit reinforces the sense of one's own mortality, in this case reinforced by the absence of those clients who have already departed for worlds beyond. Vinnie Doyle's mirror is still there, aging rather gracefully, but the same cannot be said of everything else. Most of the new old men are unrecognizable to me, Art O'Duffy's battered guitar now resounds off some other tavern wall, and today the students appear to favor a ghastly, disco-like kip down the road. Only Mr. Brady remains solid, much the good publican of Matthew's gospel, yet even his judgment sometimes slips a bit, as evidenced by the presence of a Pac-Man leering out from the bar area.

On the outside, too, I have noticed change, some inevitable, some not, almost all deplorable. Where the town I knew offered no alternative to fish-and-chips wrapped in greasy newsprint, this Maynooth boasts trendy boutiques and no less than three take-out Chinese shops. A seminary that once spewed forth admirably reactionary Men of God now graduates concerned candidates of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Even the symbol of manly Ireland, black Guinness, proudly known as "stout," has succumbed to the Pepsi Generation with a "Guinness is good for you" advertising campaign featuring neat little Yuppie men and unconscionably thin women.

But inside, I am happy to report, inside it is Mr. Brady who still rules, not the age. □



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BOOK REVIEWS

SOLZHENITSYN: A BIOGRAPHY

Michael Scammell/Norton/$29.95

John Muggeridge

If you include notes, bibliography, and index, Michael Scammell's *Solzhenitsyn: A Biography* covers 1,051 pages. Perhaps he should have called it *Solzhenitsyn: An Encyclopedia.*

Not that Scammell rambles. His prose is workmanlike; his ideas are well ordered. He says what he is going to say and says it. Nor does he display the slightest symptom of Carlos Baker's disease, or *documentia.* For Scammell the art of writing a man's life always transcends that of piecing together the torn-off pages of his desk diaries. *Solzhenitsyn* is a big book for one reason only: It deals with a big question. Scammell wants to know whether the rise of Soviet power represents "a temporary aberration of European culture (though much less temporary than the similar phenomenon of Nazism)," or whether it points to "a general collapse of our civilization into barbarism." In his view this is the question of the age, and he has written at such length about Solzhenitsyn to help his readers come to grips with it.

The Communist world, then, really *is* an evil empire. The great merit of this biography is that author and subject are on the same ideological wavelength. Both take the Cold War seriously. Scammell is therefore able to discuss Solzhenitsyn in relation to it with sympathy and understanding. Also with authority. Translator, long-time editor of *Index on Censorship*, a magazine which specializes in documenting the lack of free speech behind the Iron Curtain, he has for many years now devoted himself to keeping English-speaking readers in touch with Russia's dissident culture. In fact it was in connection with this same heroic and largely unsung scholarly enterprise that just over a decade ago he began collecting material for a life of Solzhenitsyn which would "illustrate and explain a quintessential Russian and a major figure of our era."

Scammell argues that it is perfectly possible to be both. One important service he performs in this book is to shatter the media image of Solzhenitsyn as an Old Believer who spends his days writing outdated novels and chewing over dead quarrels. To view him thus, of course, is to accept the premise of his enemies; it is to assume that modernity begins with revolution and that therefore anti-Bolsheviks such as Solzhenitsyn are by their natures anti-modern. For Scammell the exact opposite is true; there is no necessary connection between reality and revolution; in fact the Bolsheviks are the ones whose outlook lacks credibility, and when Solzhenitsyn challenges their claim to be the wave of the future, far from turning his back on the present, he is confronting the central issue facing today's generation: how to keep alive the idea of intellectual freedom in a world so widely committed to believing that every left-wing revolution marks yet another victory for science over ignorance and superstition.

John Muggeridge teaches history at Niagara College in Welland, Ontario.

According to Scammell, what turned Solzhenitsyn into so unyielding an opponent of historicism was early exposure to Russian literature. His aunt Irina began plying him with books by Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky when he was barely nine, but even more ominously she presented him with a collection of Russian proverbs. Thus his first impression was that truth is fixed and transcendent and that its usual exponents are artists, poets, and mystics.

So the damage was done. At the age of ten he entitled a notebook, "Twentieth Century: On the Meaning of the Twentieth Century," but, alas, this boyish bow in the direction of Hegel was very far from indicating that Aunt Irina's influence had waned; the notebook itself he filled with tales of fantasy and adventure. At high school he formally converted to Marxism and joined the Komsomol; at university he became a famous editor of the student wall newspaper and an attempt was even made to recruit him for the NKVD. All to no avail. Though ready enough to embrace the new patriotism, he could not bring himself to accept the new approach to reality. He had the wrong sort of moral imagination to make a good *apparatchik.* Significantly, his first serious writing project, an epic novel celebrating the Revolution of 1917, was inspired by *War and Peace*, whose author Lenin once blamed for defeating the Revolution of 1905. Nearly fifty years later Solzhenitsyn is still working on it, having changed sides but not literary mentors.

At first Solzhenitsyn did not see where his commitment to literature and morality was leading him. The fact that it required him to attach significance to both words in the expression, "Soviet legality," caused him no intellectual difficulties. He took for granted that governments on the side of the angels would act angelically, and if ever they forgot their obligations as gentlemen and revolutionaries, one could always threaten to restorm the Winter Palace. So it was with unshaken confidence in the future that in 1944 he and a fellow Red Army officer found time between defending the Fatherland to draw up "Resolution No. 1" which not only criticized Stalin for trampling on civil rights, but called for the formation of a new party dedicated to putting Russia back on the path of true Leninism.

Not until Resolution No. 1 had duly landed Solzhenitsyn in Gulag did he come to appreciate the contradiction between truth as propounded by Lenin and as handed down by Aunt Irina. Here, as Scammell shows, is the supreme irony of Solzhenitsyn's life. The camps were supposed to make him see the error of his ways, but they ended up disabusing him of the wrong heresy. Smersh should have either shot him or not picked him up. Instead it sent him to the one place in Stalin's Russia where Stalinism could be discussed on its merits. And not only Stalinism. Gulag encouraged a revisionist approach to the whole Soviet enterprise. In his very first cell Solzhenitsyn met Anatoly Fastenko, a Social Democrat whose prison experience went back to 1904, and whose account of it directly contradicted what Solzhenitsyn remembered learning from history teachers. In the presence of a known police informer Fastenko repeated Descartes' Maxim, "Question *everything*," which Solzhenitsyn took to heart so thoroughly that within two years he had abandoned Leninism, and by the end of his sentence had come to regard the October Revolution neither as a red dawn, nor even as a painful if necessary step in human progress, but as an avoidable tragedy.

In Gulag Solzhenitsyn learnt above all to question Marxist psychological assumptions. Here was the dialectic red in tooth and claw. In this world honor, loyalty, and decency were not only out of fashion but suicidal. You were either a trustee or a victim; you either betrayed or were betrayed. The whole duty of man boiled down to a single commandment: Thou shalt save thine

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own skin. Yet some resisted it. In whatever prison or camp Solzhenitsyn found himself, altruism was practiced and friendship sacrificed for. Always there were choices to make, temptations to overcome, levels of human behavior to avoid sinking below. Everywhere, in fact, was living proof of Solzhenitsyn's exultant assertion: "It is not the result that counts . . . but *the spirit!* Not *what*—but *how*. Not what has been attained—but at what price."

Thus Solzhenitsyn came to realize that he was on a journey towards spiritual rather than political enlightenment. Gulag taught him that sin, not sociology, causes human suffering, and that those who ignore this truth are fated to reinforce it. "In the intoxication of youthful success," he recalls in *The Gulag Archipelago*, "I had felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel." Only after having had to do penance behind barbed wire did he sense within himself "the first stirrings of good." Gradually it was disclosed to him "that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, not between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts." At last the fog of materialism was lifting. Once he had thought himself to be in the hands of history; now he knew that he was in those of Providence. "God of the Universe!" he confessed while recovering from a cancer operation in the prison hospital at Ekibastuz, "I believe again!/Though I renounced You, You were with me!"

But what most interests Scammell is the effect that Gulag had on Solzhenitsyn's development as a writer. It helped him to rediscover life's moral dimension, thus freeing him from the sterilities of socialist realism, but it also inspired him to try out a new genre of writing: transcendental realism. The most famous example of it, of course, is *The Gulag Archipelago*, which Solzhenitsyn revealingly subtitles "An Experiment in Literary Investigation." *Gulag* is investigative literature. The camps exist; their three million innocent inhabitants can be counted; their machine-gun-swept perimeters show up in aerial photography. Solzhenitsyn, however, does more than take pictures of them. He makes them into the setting for an anti-Soviet morality play in which he himself is the central character.

There results one of the sweetest marriages between form and content in modern literature. *Gulag* is what it says. It *is* the story of a soul, an account of how Solzhenitsyn came to realize through suffering that, as he puts it in one of his camp poems quoted in *Gulag*, the twists and turns of his life were illumined

> Not with good judgment or with desire. . . .
> But with the even glow of the Higher Meaning.

It *says* that life does indeed have a higher meaning, and one, moreover, which is beyond the power of governments, however cunning their propagandists or brutal their thought police, to tamper with. Orwell was wrong in believing that force could obliterate truth. Otherwise Gulags would work. In fact they are counterproductive. Intended to demonstrate that the idea of revolution is invincible, they succeed only in exposing its hollowness. Solzhenitsyn records watching his fellow prisoner, Fastenko, opening a food parcel. It contained a few ounces of black bread and a dozen peeled potatoes through each of which an awl had been pushed. "That," observes Solzhenitsyn, "was what this human being had earned for sixty-three years of honesty and doubts." Yet Fastenko got the last laugh. No amount of potato probing could prevent either him from airing his honest skepticism, or Solzhenitsyn from being infected by it.

The Gulag Archipelago, then, is a documented country of the mind. Gulag not only turned Solzhenitsyn into a Christian patriot, but gave his Christian patriotism post-revolutionary credentials. Here was organized non-Soviet thinking within the Soviet Union, a sprawling community of several million Russians on whom Moscow's ministry of truth exercised about as much influence as the Delphic Oracle, the perfect basis, in other words, for a conservatism untainted by nostalgia. In Gulag you can believe in the *ancien régime* without appearing ancient; you can resist the progressivism of the day without being written off as an epicure or a fascist; you can proclaim your faith in the natural law without having to join a strident minority or carry unfashionably worded picket signs. The main thing that made camp life bearable for Solzhenitsyn was the fact that for ten years he was free from all kinds of meetings.

> No one tries to persuade you to *apply* for Party membership. No one comes around to squeeze membership dues out of you in *voluntary* societies. There is no trade union. . . . And there are no "production meetings." You cannot be elected to any position. You cannot be appointed some kind of delegate. And the really important thing is . . . that they cannot compel you to be a propagandist. Nor—to listen to propaganda. Nor—when someone jerks the string, to shout: "We demand! . . . We will not permit! . . ." Nor—will they ever drag you off to the electoral precinct to vote freely and secretly for a single candidate. No one requires any "socialist undertakings" of you. Nor—self-criticism of your mistakes. Nor—articles in the wall newspaper. . . .

The character most famously identified with this freedom within slavery is Ivan Denisovich, Everyman in Solzhenitsyn's Gulag morality play, an ordinary Russian of the 1950s who combines peasant cunning with resignation to the will of God in a way that would have delighted Tolstoy and even caught Khrushchev's fancy.

But not for long. In *The Oak and the Calf* Solzhenitsyn attributes the success of his first published story neither to poetry nor to politics but to "unchanging peasant nature"; it was a case of "the muzhik Ivan Denisovich" appealing to "the supreme muzhik Nikita Khrushchev." Yet for all Khrushchev's homespun wit and tearful anti-Stalinist breast-beating, he remained, as Solzhenitsyn well knew, a dedicated and ruthless Marxist, in fact the last man in Russia likely to tolerate peaceful coexistence between transcendental and socialist realism. Any official favor bestowed on *Ivan Denisovich* must therefore be tactical rather than ideological, and Solzhenitsyn could be assured that the rhetoric of liberalization notwithstanding, outside Gulag and the world of *samizdat* he remained in hostile territory. Going public as an author would of necessity mean exposing himself as an anti-Soviet. "How could I with no one forcing me," he wonders in his memoirs, "have come to inform against myself?"

Possessed as he was with an artist's craving for critical recognition, how could he have done otherwise? One has to remember that Soviet writers who go underground, unlike their Western counterparts, really do cut themselves off from access to the established media. Imagine a world without slim

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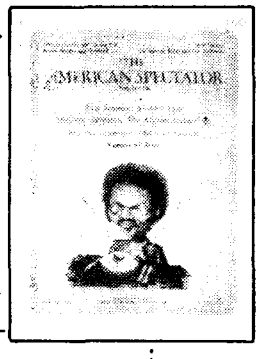

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volumes, university quarterlies, or writers-in-residenceships. Imagine Allen Ginsberg being content to spend a lifetime memorizing his verses or hiding typescripts of them in Moscow apartments. Nor was it just literary claustrophobia that prompted Solzhenitsyn to take the momentous step of offering *Ivan Denisovich* to *Novy Mir*. He injects such a burningly prophetic note into his camp writings that it is difficult to imagine him *not* trying to get them into print. What would be the point of prophesying in private? Solzhenitsyn has the true poet's sense of being responsible for keeping alive sacred truths. Having rediscovered Russia's Christian heritage in Gulag, he wished to pay tribute to this fact in the world of meetings, propaganda, and one-man-every-vote democracy which rehabilitation had sentenced him to. At a particularly lachrymose point in the Twenty-Second Party Congress, Khrushchev promised to erect a monument to fallen zeks. Needless to say, no concrete or granite monstrosity has arisen to be added to the itinerary of visiting disarmers. Instead it is Solzhenitsyn who has undertaken to keep the memory of Gulag alive—in a series of books about which he is entitled to say without boasting:

> Not marble nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme.

Of more immediate concern in Moscow in the early sixties, of course, were the gilded monuments of commissars. As soon as the extent of Solzhenitsyn's attack on Soviet historiography became apparent, it was time to attack *his* credibility. First came articles in literary reviews diminishing the reputation of *Ivan Denisovich*. (In Western left-wing echo chambers the word then went out that we should admire Solzhenitsyn more as a freedom fighter than as a writer—which ignores the basic point that what makes him a freedom fighter *is* his achievement as a writer.) Then he was libeled out of the Lenin Prize for literature, and finally in the fall of 1965 the KGB stole a collection of his manuscripts.

Scammell makes Solzhenitsyn's subsequent nine-year-long confrontation with history's most pitiless despotism the centerpiece of his biography, devoting seventeen of fifty-two chapters to it. And rightly so. Here his original question concerning the durability of Soviet power comes most sharply into focus. Does the future belong to the Christian West or the Marxist East? Solzhenitsyn's achievement is to have precluded the possibility of a third scenario. He called détente's bluff. While the William Appleman Williamses were busy faking United States responsibility for the Cold War and business representatives were hurrying eastwards with software in their sample cases and diplomats were promising never again to challenge the presence of Soviet tanks on the Elbe in return for being allowed to send Canadian symphony orchestras to Byelorussia, this one man living without a residence permit in Moscow created in *Gulag* so powerful a symbol of Soviet frightfulness that over ten years later it is still necessary for the meanest peace camper in the remotest corner of rural liberaldom to name *both* superpowers in their broadsheets. As Solzhenitsyn said in his Nobel Prize address: "The simplest act of an ordinary brave man is not to participate in lies, not to support false actions. But it is within the power of writers and artists to do much more: *to defeat the lie*. For in the struggle with lies art always triumphs and always will."

So we are back to Aunt Irina and Dostoevsky's famous claim that "Beauty will save the world." Not science, not history, not the class struggle, but beauty. This is where Solzhenitsyn nonpluses Western liberals. Unbounded as is their admiration for his civil rights record, they cannot help being puzzled by his invoking Dostoevsky's name. *Dostoevsky*? Didn't that troubled genius write *against* the Enlightenment? And isn't the mixture of panslavism and religiosity which Solzhenitsyn finds so admirable precisely what we moderns are supposed to dislike most in Dostoevsky's thinking? How could someone such as Solzhenitsyn, who had dared in 1967 publicly to oppose the Soviet censorship, approve of the "universe of overblown gestures, murky depths and aggressive sentimentality" which the Prague Spring dissident, Milan Kundera, sees evidence of in Dostoevsky's work? Doesn't being against the censorship make one *per se* a progressivist? Not in Solzhenitsyn's case. His famous "Letter to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers" demands the emancipation of Russian literature from government control, but says nothing about the virtue of free speech in general, while *The Gulag Archipelago*, his most eloquent tribute to the victims of political oppression, declares all revolutions to be false. "They destroy only *those carriers* of evil contemporary with them. . . . And they then take to themselves as their heritage the actual evil itself, magnified still more."

So, what *are* fair-minded liberals to think of Solzhenitsyn? That his conservatism is an aberration, the result of Gulag-induced bitterness, long separation from current intellectual trends, or just plain Russian curmudgeonliness; they might even agree with blahlettrist Peter Ustinov, whom I once heard accuse Solzhenitsyn of being more interested in making money than in saving civilization. But one thing they cannot do is to take him seriously as an anti-modernist. For in their eyes love of freedom and love of modernity are coterminous.

This is what makes Scammell's account of Solzhenitsyn in Moscow so admirable. It rises above liberal stereotypes. Scammell refuses to discredit Solzhenitsyn's case against Soviet Communism simply because it appeals to a pre-Soviet Christian tradition; he treats it, in fact, with the same sort of sympathetic understanding that one would expect to see displayed towards an argument against Nazism based on traditionalist Jewish sources. Nor does Scammell allow himself to be seduced by the dulcet tones of liberalization. For him, as for Solzhenitsyn, campaigns to give socialism a human face must fail because socialism and humanity are at cross purposes. The October Revolution, says Solzhenitsyn, was built on lies; lies can be kept in place only through violence; political repression is therefore a necessary precondition for Soviet government. And Scammell agrees.

In other words, he appreciates that what divided Solzhenitsyn from his government was not politics but cosmology. They were on opposite sides in a war of religion, a fact which Scammell tragically confirms in his description of the friendship between Solzhenitsyn and Alexander Tvardovsky. Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novy Mir* and first publisher of Solzhenitsyn's writings, continued to champion them even after the post-Khrushchev repression which caused the downfall of *Novy Mir* and may have hastened his own death. Yet he and Solzhenitsyn remained dear enemies. Tvardovsky was an establishment man; he belonged to the Party elite, had a dacha, and went

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on hard-currency visits to the West. "The dividing line between them," says Scammell, "was still the barbed-wire fence and the ploughed strip, a ghostly barrier that continued to separate the oppressed 'us' from the privileged 'them.' " Solzhenitsyn's comments on Tvardovsky may sound unduly harsh and tendentious, but they were made, Scammell reminds us, in harsh and tendentious times. In any case, who are we to demand impartiality when our own much vaunted liberal consensus has come to sound about as sensibly objective as the theology of Hare Krishna?

Not that Scammell whitewashes Solzhenitsyn. His treatment of Solzhenitsyn's divorce and remarriage is in particular a model of balanced and charitable reporting. There were, Scammell insists, faults on both sides. The times were unstable and unconducive to matrimonial permanence. But still, Solzhenitsyn *did* commit adultery, and *did* desert his first wife in her middle age, an act of injustice for which he has felt bitterly sorry ever since. He, like the rest of us, has had to come to terms with the fact that the line between good and evil passes through each human heart. Perhaps we should expect moralists at least to avoid public immorality. Scammell, however, is concerned less with judging Solzhenitsyn than with describing him. His portrit is fair, detailed, widely documented, but above all integrated.

It is only when Solzhenitsyn is forced into the West that Scammell's resistance to liberal stereotypes crumbles. This is understandable. Zurich and Vermont are as far as it is possible to be from the bright vision which Solzhenitsyn wrote so movingly about on his release from prison camp. A prophet is not without honor save in affluent exile.[1] There is a sense of anticlimax about the last six chapters of Scammell's mammoth biography. The picture one takes away from them is of a hero who has outlived his greatness. The burning pronouncements with which he once shocked the conscience of a planet have become his "familiar litany of the West's failings"; the prophet who once refused to be silenced is now a celebrity-seeker who "fulfilled his self-chosen function of drawing attention to the subjects and ideas that preoccupied him and putting them on the public agenda."

The best one could say about him was that he had overreached himself, "his voice . . . growing shriller and less convincing as he tried to extend his range further." At least "the sheer verve, the sheer courage, and the sheer ambition of the man commanded attention and admiration." No longer, however, the sheer truth. Even with Scammell the Soviet campaign to marginalize Solzhenitsyn has succeeded. Pushing him into the West turns out to have been Moscow's most brilliant stroke. What impact can transcendental realism have among readers for whom reality has stopped being transcendent? □

[1]Western disparagement of Solzhenitsyn is fascinatingly documented in *Solzhenitsyn in Exile*, a collection of scholarly essays to be published in September by the Hoover Institution Press. This volume shows with what depressing regularity Soviet-manufactured lies and half-truths about Solzhenitsyn get taken seriously in such organs of enlightened opinion as the *Guardian*, the *New York Times*, *Die Zeit*, and *l'Humanité*. The case of *l'Humanité* is particularly interesting. This newspaper is, of course, the voice of the French Communist party. In the argument over Solzhenitsyn it has slavishly followed Moscow's line. So much for Eurocommunism. Perhaps the most chilling essay is that of John B. Dunlop which analyzes U.S. reaction to Solzhenitsyn. Dunlop makes clear, for example, that President Ford's refusal to receive Solzhenitsyn in the White House was not just a gaffe in the same category as his comment on Poland, but part of consistent U.S. foreign policy then in place. Anyone who doubts the validity of Solzhenitsyn's warning to the West should read the memo reproduced by Dunlop in which Henry Kissinger urges President Ford to avoid officially honoring the exiled dissident.

EISENHOWER: THE PRESIDENCY

Stephen E. Ambrose/Simon and Schuster/$24.95

Karl O'Lessker

President Dwight D. Eisenhower left the White House only a little over twenty-four years ago, but to those of us who are old enough to remember how things were in those days it sometimes seems an ice-age or two have gone by. Everyone has his own measure of the distance between then and now—cultural, technological, biographical, political. Perhaps none is as startling as this: Through the last years of his presidency, as his biographer Stephen Ambrose reminds us, "Eisenhower was fighting virtually a one-man battle on holding down the costs of defense. . . . *Not a single member of the White House press corps was on his side; the questions he received at his press conferences were uniformly hostile. Why wasn't the United States doing more? When would we catch up with the Russians? Did not the President fear a Soviet first strike? Was not the President's insistence on fiscal soundness imperiling the nation's security?"*

The added emphasis is mine, but the facts belong to journalism's history. Less than a quarter of a century ago the nation's media elite were a pack of unreconstructed Cold Warriors, regarding the Soviet Union as a threat to world peace and the United States as dangerously unprepared for war. Each reader today can supply his own contrast with no fear that it will be too sharp.

Eisenhower's battle to keep a lid on defense spending encapsulates a good deal of what was most important and characteristic of his eight years as President. Only now, with the publication of the second and final volume of Ambrose's magnificent biography, can we see the man and his administration as nearly whole as we are likely to for another generation. And in fact there is little prospect that any startling new evidence will ever turn up, because with the exception of a few passages in national security documents and some unrecorded conversations between Eisenhower and Central Intelligence Director Allen Dulles, everything relevant to presidential policy-making from 1953 to 1961 is now available to scholars. What will doubtless change over the years is the interpretation and assessment of Ike's motives and actions.

But what will never again be in dispute is Eisenhower's total mastery of the office. Far from being the indolent, ignorant figurehead of liberal demonology, he was as involved and well-informed a leader as we have had in the post-World War II era. Who would have guessed that the grinning dunce of Herblock's cartoons and Arthur Schlesinger's prose had been calling the shots on every major issue of foreign and domestic policy, from mutual security assistance to soil conservation, from arms control to interstate highways? Much of it he did with what political scientist Fred Greenstein has called a "hidden-hand"; but it was always Ike's hand, nobody else's, on the levers of power.

And despite his frequent golf-and-bridge vacations (during which, in any case, he couldn't escape the responsibilities of office) he was a prodigiously hard worker—up at six for breakfast and newspapers, at his desk by eight, straight through without a break till a working lunch at one, back at his desk until six or later, a cocktail, dinner off a TV tray while watching the evening news, then more paper work till about eleven, when he would finally knock off to spend an hour painting, before bed and a little light reading. Nor should it be necessary to add that the *kind* of work which filled those long hours was rather more wearing than figuring out a lead for today's column or marking exams. But the journalists and professors of the day were happy to believe in Ike's indolence and incapacity.

It's not just that Eisenhower was thought to be lazy, he was widely regarded as plain dumb, a simple, even simple-minded, soldier being manipulated by far more clever and ruthless men—George Humphrey, John Foster Dulles, oil millionaires and the like. Here again the truth could hardly be more different, as the following piece of unimpeachable testimony should make clear: After a stag dinner Ike hosted for some of the nation's top journalists, businessmen, and government officials, George Kennan, dazzled by the President's performance, remarked that he had shown "his intellectual ascendancy over every man in the room."

Kennan may have been surprised by this, but the object of his new-found admiration certainly would not have. In fact Ike was about as arrogant as a man can be, as confident of his own intellectual powers as he was contemptuous of those of most of the people he had to deal with. Never for a moment did he doubt that he was the best man to lead America. His inability to identify a successor in whom he could have full confidence had more to do, I think, with his own self-esteem than with the objective failings of those around him. Most politicians he simply regarded as intellectual and moral pygmies, most businessmen as far too narrow-minded. All of them he measured by the yardstick of his own self-appraisal—and almost all of them came off badly, lacking that unique and indispensable combination of qualities he saw in himself: character, self-discipline, maturity, devotion to duty, and "common sense."

It was this last which he regarded as

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the transcendent intellectual virtue. No matter how complex a problem, Eisenhower's solution was always just a matter of common sense, and it irritated him beyond words that everyone else didn't recognize it as such. The fact that they didn't, or at best only recognized it after he explained it to them, was merely further confirmation of his superiority. Not surprisingly, he found it almost impossible to believe he had ever been wrong about anything.

It was not an attractive quality in an otherwise immensely attractive man, but we should note that he worked as hard as any President in reaching decisions. On any difficult question he gave the fullest possible airing to divergent views, listening carefully and patiently to discussions and absorbing reams of written material before reaching his "common sense" conclusion. Where he showed his extraordinary self-confidence most markedly was in his determination to hold down defense spending against the near-unanimous advice of his official family, and in the face of a massive onslaught by not only the news media but the entire Democratic party[!] and much of the Republican congressional leadership as well.

Two factors account for his intransigence on the issue. The first, obviously, was his unshakable conviction that no one knew more about the subject than he—not an unreasonable belief for the former supreme commander, Army chief of staff, and head of NATO. The cries of pain and pleas of dire necessity issuing from the Pentagon simply left him unmoved.

Second, and less obvious, Eisenhower was by all odds the most fiscally conservative President we have had since Calvin Coolidge, this despite the label of "Modern Republican" that he insisted on attaching to himself. Tirelessly throughout his two terms he preached a fundamentalist gospel of fiscal responsibility (though in fact he had to endure unbalanced budgets in four of his eight fiscal years and ended up with an aggregate deficit of $18 billion). The notion of cutting taxes in the absence of a budget surplus was to his mind despicable and ludicrous. Higher expenditures could only be met by higher taxes, but the federal government already absorbed far too much of the nation's earnings. And the men in the defense establishment were the biggest spenders of all; if you let them have their way they would spend the nation into bankruptcy and economic collapse.

There is no evidence that Eisenhower's penny-pinching on defense helped produce the dangerously underfunded military that President Reagan found in 1981. As we now know, there never was a "missile gap" as Ike's critics charged. And for all of Khrushchev's bluster, the U.S. enjoyed overwhelming nuclear superiority throughout the 1960s and into the '70s. Nor was there ever a realistic prospect that we and our NATO allies could or would have done much to redress the imbalance of conventional forces in Europe—nor what the benefits would have been had we done so. What then would have been gained by Ike's acquiescence to demands for additional billions of defense spending during each of his years as President? In any case, the sharp deterioration of our military power relative to that of the Soviet Union occurred in response to the debacle of Vietnam.

But if Eisenhower was right about defense spending, and indeed about most other matters of national security as well—Ambrose argues persuasively that he was at his incomparable best in "crisis management"—his record in the domestic area is open to a good deal of responsible criticism. Ambrose, whose admiration for Eisenhower shines through almost every page, finds him to have been grossly negligent in his dealings with Senator Joseph McCarthy and on most civil rights matters. The latter case is particularly revealing of both the man and the President.

As everyone who lived through those years recalls, Eisenhower was unhappy with the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. Time after time he refused to endorse the decision, on the grounds that it was a President's responsibility neither to endorse nor to repudiate a Supreme Court ruling, but only to uphold it in his executive capacity. Whether this constituted, as his critics claimed, an "abdication of moral responsibility" and thus served to encourage white Southern recalcitrance is still debatable. But it is clear that Ike's personal sympathies rested with the segregationists; he had no Negro friends and made no effort to hear the integrationist side of the issue. His innermost feelings on race relations were perhaps best captured in an anecdote Chief Justice Earl Warren recounted many years later. As the guests were filing out of the dining room following a White House dinner shortly before the Court announced its 1954 decision, Eisenhower took Warren by the arm and said of the Southerners, "These are not bad people. All they are concerned about is to see that their sweet little girls are not required to sit in school alongside some big overgrown Negroes."

Yet this was the same man who, as Ambrose notes, "had integrated the last of the armed forces' units, had integrated Washington, D.C., and the White House staff . . . and had put through the 1957 Civil Rights Act." Moreover he was genuinely committed to securing full voting rights for blacks: "This was an area in which the President was unequivocal; he thought it a national disgrace that citizens were denied the right to vote on the basis of their color, and said so privately to his Southern friends on many occasions." And of course when the crunch came in Little Rock, he took the distasteful step of sending in the 101st Airborne Division to enforce desegregation of the high school. Most surprisingly, as ex-President he supported passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, strongly disapproved of Barry Goldwater's vote against it, and through the press and friends warned Goldwater against courting the "white backlash" vote.

All in all, then, a perplexingly mixed record on one of the most controversial—and consequential—policy areas of his presidency. One gets the sense of an incessant struggle within himself between the prejudices of his Kansas farm boyhood and pre-World War II army career, on the one side, and a bedrock sense of fairness and duty on the other.

If the civil rights question was painful for Eisenhower, the quest for arms control was positively agonizing. The longer he remained President the more intense grew his conviction that an uncontrolled nuclear arms race would bring catastrophe to mankind. And yet his dislike for the Soviet Union was at least as great as Ronald Reagan's. Moreover, his own passionate belief in the need for arms control had little support within the administration: At every step toward a limited test ban he had to fight an exhausting battle with the Atomic Energy Commission, the Joint Chiefs, and the defense establishment generally. →

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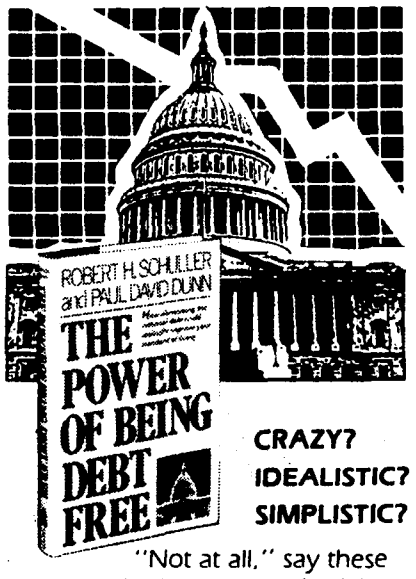

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Ambrose records Eisenhower's "own judgment, which he expressed on innumerable occasions," that his greatest failure as President "was the failure to achieve peace. When he left office, the tensions and dangers and costs of the Cold War were higher than they had ever been." To what extent was this Ike's fault? His biographer notes repeated Soviet rebuffs to U.S. initiatives such as Atoms for Peace and Open Skies, but argues that the President's "own deeply rooted anti-Communism was certainly a contributing factor to the failure. Eisenhower refused to trust the Russians to even the slightest degree. . . . This was good policy for winning votes, and may even have been good for achieving limited victories in the Cold War, but it was damaging to the cause of world peace."

How so? Leaving aside the slur about winning votes—it's hard to think of any President less likely to subordinate national security to politics—the question remains whether the Soviets in the 1950s were any more willing to sacrifice military advantage to "the cause of world peace" than they are today. In fact, Ambrose's own account of Khrushchev's destruction of the May 1960 Paris summit conference (using the U-2 flights as a trumpery excuse) is the best possible evidence of the Kremlin's intransigence. Then as now, power, not trust, was the central issue. Had Eisenhower been more willing to trust the Russians, it would only have accelerated their overtaking of the U.S in strategic nuclear arms.

How finally shall we judge Eisenhower the President? Ambrose notes that shortly after Ike left the White House "a poll of American historians placed him nearly at the bottom of the list of Presidents. By the early 1980s, a new poll placed him ninth." Ambrose thinks his reputation will continue to rise, and I am inclined to agree. But even more to the point is the biographer's reminder that, as with other such exercises, "any attempt to assess Eisenhower's eight years as President inevitably reveals more about the person doing the assessing than it does about Eisenhower [and] tends to be little more than a declaration of the current politics and prejudices of the author."

Still, there are certain hard facts that Ike partisans can point to in support of the proposition that he was an outstanding President: first, that his rigidly old-fashioned economic policies helped produce eight years of low-inflation prosperity and growth; and second, that despite ample opportunity to do otherwise he kept the nation out of war. Do these apparent triumphs mask deeper failures *sub specie aeternitatis*? Probably only a John Kenneth Galbraith would still try to make the case—altogether discredited by a quarter-century's further experience with socialism—that the economic good times exacted too high a price from later generations. But serious people on both the left and the right continue to raise questions about the long-term consequences of Eisenhower's national security policies. The problem with such questions is that there is no way of knowing what the consequences of different policies would have been. Should we have nuked the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu? The Chinese because of Quemoy and Matsu? The Russians because of Hungary? Powerful voices within the administration urged all of those courses of action and Eisenhower said no. Do we know for sure how the world would look today if he had said yes on any of them?

Speculation about "the road not taken" makes more sense in connection with those few issues on which the book has, in effect, been closed—most notably, Vietnam. Following the signing of the Indochina peace agreement in Geneva in July 1954, Eisenhower could choose either to abide by its terms and let all Vietnam fall to the Communists in 1956 or else commit American prestige and wealth to the creation of a permanently independent Republic of South Vietnam. He chose to do the latter. Two decades later all of Vietnam fell under Communist rule—and 50,000 Americans and millions of Indochinese were dead and incalculable damage was done to our political and social fabric. The book, as I say, is closed and Eisenhower's choice turns out to have been an appalling mistake.

But the book remains open on almost every other major decision of his presidency; they continue, as Ambrose rightly says, "to divide the nation's political parties and people in the decades that [have] followed." For that reason I think it best to resist the temptation of trying to draw up a balance-sheet on our 34th President. We would do better, instead, to settle for what we now know about him—thanks to the work of Stephen Ambrose, above all, but also William Bragg Ewald, Fred Greenstein, and a few others—that is so strikingly different from what we thought we knew during his presidency: in Murray Kempton's words, written in 1967 in an article entitled "The Underestimation of Dwight D. Eisenhower," that he was "the great tortoise upon whose back the world sat for eight years," never recognizing "the cunning beneath the shell." □

DISTANT NEIGHBORS

Alan Riding/Alfred A. Knopf/$18.95

Reid Buckley

Imagine growing up in a country whose founding fathers are without exception morally blemished; in which the ruling myth is historically a tissue of lies; in which almost all public servants are crooked, from the lowest to the highest; in which political assassinations are the order of the day; in which absolutely everyone knows that everything that one is told is (a) false, or (b) sheerest rodomontade, yet in which scholars, journalists, artists, and all other members of the intelligentsia cover the deceptions, paper over the sins, and extol the virtue of what is transparent to everyone as being a system of total moral and intellectual corruption.

Whew! If you can't imagine, then consult the nearest Mexican. That fabulous country has been ruined by its intellectual dishonesty. Oh, yes: Colonial Mexico was exploited by Spain, and for generations after pillaged by the ruling white aristocracy, which included such fascinating patriots as the villainous Santa Anna, who lost the north to the United States yet had an equestrian statue of himself erected in the central plaza of Mexico City, with one hand pointing (as he said) toward Texas, symbolic of his determination to regain the territory, though wags at once noticed that the hand also seemed to be pointing to the national mint. Sure, Porfirio Diaz's long dictatorship fermented the sanguinary decade of revolution that began in 1910, and which implanted the neo-Marxist dogmas that have done so much to distort history and mortgage the future. And, true: The Carranzas, Obregóns, Cálleses, and Cárdenases, not to mention such bandits of the more recent past as Presidents Echeverría and López Portillo—the *caciques* and the politicians, along with their tens of thousands of minions in the bureaucracies—have feasted on this poor suffering country as though it were carrion. But the major sin is self-deception. It is the government and the people of Mexico *both* lying to themselves—about everything—that makes Mexico an economic basket case and a sociological nightmare.

This country of tragic contradictions is comprehensively examined by Alan Riding in his book, *Distant Neighbors*, for which Mr. Riding may likely be called the Hugh Thomas of Mexico. I took sharp exception to some of the evidence and many of the findings in Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War*; I take exception to several of Mr. Riding's conclusions, which are sometimes impaired by his liberal mindset. (He assumes, for instance, that what is called "social justice" can only be achieved through redistributionist policies managed by the state; he evidences little comprehension of, or sympathy for, the *Cristeros*, who were pitted against the Jacobin fanaticism of a revolution that burned churches, raped nuns, and tortured and killed humble priests.) *Distant Neighbors*, nevertheless, is an indispensable study.

Brazilian-born, Mr. Riding has been writing since 1971 about Mexico for the *Financial Times* and the *Economist*, which he followed as Mexico bureau chief for the *New York Times*. He is a skilled journalist who has thoroughly absorbed the anthropology of the Mexican people and who has intelligently applied this knowledge to the anguish of the present. Mexico is a country that should be powerful and prosperous. It is broke, internationally a laughing-stock, and torn with self-doubt. Piling example upon example, Mr. Riding shows how reforms are ever sacrificed to political stability, how economic imperatives are frustrated by the official socialist ideology of the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*—the PRI—and how everything is drowned in corruption.

Take the agrarian reforms that were the burning issue of Emiliano Zapata. He led his peasant army into Mexico City demanding a return of the land to the poor (mainly Indian) from whom it had been wrested. Well, as Mr. Riding demonstrates, no sooner was Zapata murdered (at the instance of General Carranza) than the "reforms" that took place did so mostly to the enrichment of warlords. Oh, the

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Reid Buckley is a novelist and has recently founded The Buckley School of Public Speaking.

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rhetoric remained radical and proletarian, but generals like Carranza and Obregón were themselves *latifundistas* (vast landholders). In 1930 President Calles declared, "Agrarianism is a failure." In 1934, however, under Cárdenas, the restive peasants were placated with the distribution of 18 million hectares (over 46 million acres). The results were catastrophic. Not only was the land parceled out in plots so tiny that wretched subsistence was the best that could be squeezed from them, the mammoth total of the expropriations stirred opposition so fierce that by 1947 President Alemán amended the Constitution of 1917 in such fashion as virtually to freeze agrarian reform. Meanwhile, the curse of endemic Mexican corruption was—is ever—at work, eroding gains. Government purchasing agents demanded bribes, underweighing the crops: the Rural Credit Bank, with its 38,000 employees, "is a bloated and inefficient bureaucracy racked by corruption." "Powerful *latifundistas*," Mr. Riding notes elsewhere, "in league with local politicians took to occupying and fencing off communal lands owned by Indian communities. . . . There survived or emerged . . . *caciques* who controlled much of production and commerce in their regions."

All this coincided with a population explosion among the peasants, further impoverishing them. When the demagogic Luis Echeverría Alvarez took over the presidency in 1970, he expropriated 11.5 million more hectares, of which he doled out 6.5 million to the peasants. This largesse was a typical sham, satisfying socialist sentiment, but bringing to the wretched Indians bitter disillusion, because fully 85 percent of the land distributed between 1952 and 1982 was unarable.

Today, "a deep sense of hopelessness runs through the countryside." Peasant leaders who raise a cry shrill enough to pierce the hypocrisy in the capital are routinely murdered. "Successive governments have . . . used corruption, coercion and repression to prevent the emergence of any truly representative independent peasant organizations," says Mr. Riding. Ministers of Agriculture come and, when they go, go generally to accusations of graft and peculation. Production has plummeted so desperately over the past half century that the government must import billions of dollars worth of grains and other foodstuffs annually, including sugar, of which Mexico used to be an exporter, which it sells to the public at unrealistically low prices, further weakening the domestic agricultural market. Concludes Mr. Riding: "The government [has] become a prisoner of the agrarian myth that it invented: land handouts [are] not the answer, but officials [dare] not say so. . . ."

Whether it is the myth of the existence of democracy in Mexico (it is an authoritarian state), or the myth that it is truly socialist (it is by fits and starts a corporate state, with much capitalist backsliding), nothing is ever what it purports to be, nor, when it comes to such practical matters as running an oil industry, works. Everything is always going wrong, though this is never, ever admitted, the omniscience of Mexico's leaders being one other sacred, though patently, absurdly false, tenet.

What is the matter with these people? Mr. Riding is perceptive about the Mexican character. "Most . . . are meditative and philosophical, they are discreet, evasive and distrustful, they are proud and consumed by questions of honor, they are forced to work hard but dream of a life of leisure, they are warm, humorous and sentimental and occasionally also violent and cruel, they are enormously creative and imaginative yet impossible to organize, they are internally set in their ways and externally anarchic," though—significantly, fatefully—the Mexican "also accepts the dictates imposed by an authoritarian ethos."

Indeed, this combustible people is withal a docile people. This is the inheritance of the absolutist political authority imposed for centuries by Spain and the Church; but it is native to Mexico as well in the Indian's subservience to the *cacique*. No understanding of the Mexican is possible without appreciating this cultural impediment. The *cacique* was the Indian's tribal leader. He was similar to the *ephori* of ancient Sparta, to the *decurion* of the Incas. He became in colonial and post-colonial times the political and economic overlord. Everything is run through the *cacique* system, including the structure of government, where favors are granted in return for loyalty. It is beyond the comprehension of Mexicans that it is here where corruption begins, because to them it is in the natural order of things that a father should look after his children. This political extension of the family applies throughout Mexican society. Labor union leaders, or business cartel chiefs, or patriarchs of important clans are every bit as much *caciques* as the warlords of yore, and filial respect is accorded them.

The *cacique* system of social organization can be a strength, a protection in a hostile environment; but it has ultimately been Mexico's curse, because the domain exercised by the *cacique* is not only economic, it is intellectual too. The national shame—the *vergüenza*—is that the intelligentsia of Mexico have prostituted themselves to the PRI, with only latterly a Carlos Fuentes or an Octavio Paz spouting a few hard realities. For the most part, pens are for sale. It may be natural that of Mexican officials Mr. Riding should write, "No amount of tough questioning will elicit admissions of failures of the system." But what he goes on to say is damning: "Even Mexican historians, political scientists, and sociologists are reluctant to be frank in public. . . ." In public? The sin that they commit in their souls is that they lie to themselves, until the intellectual dishonesty of the ethos they breathe is no longer discernible by them.

The pervasiveness of this practice of self-deception is hard to believe. In the winter of 1971 I had gone to Mexico on a research project. A close friend, herself half-Spanish, half-Mexican, recommended a certain young matron to be my research assistant. She was described to me as very bright, of good family, honest as the day, a hard worker, and a thoroughly professional historian. In addition to these manifold attributes, I discovered that she was a knock-out, a brunette with the most delicate of fair complexions and engulfing dark eyes, and I surmised that she was, besides, an emancipated Mexican female, because there had been no difficulty in arranging to meet *à deux* for an introductory supper at the old Ritz Hotel. A generation earlier no young married woman of good repute would have acceded to the most innocent appointment with a strange male, not to mention a foreigner, without bringing along a *dueña* packing all the charm in her mustachioed countenance of Two Ton Tony Galento; in fact, without her husband skulking behind the potted palms, loaded pistol in hand.

We talked about the project: She was to look up certain records about an American oilman in the period 1903-1923 who had ultimately been expelled from Mexico. I did not conceal that the subject of her research was my father, nor that my father had no use for Madero and Carranza and the other revolutionary principals of the time. I let slip also my amazement that Pancho Villa—quite simply a monster by any civilized reckoning—should have been recently elevated to the Pantheon of Heroes, his name writ in gold on the rotunda. It is my impression that she agreed. Describing the terms of her honorarium, I gave her a $100 advance, which she told me was satisfactory.

After a pleasant chat and an indifferent meal, she left. One month later, in Madrid, I received a check in dollars to the amount of my advance, along with a note telling me curtly that she could have nothing to do with aiding in the investigation of the activities in Mexico of "an enemy of the Revolution." I had not asked her for a value judgment, mind: I had asked her only for the discovery of certain facts—for a historical piece of research, whatever those facts turned out to be. Which is a shame. There is a crippling distortion of all reality when even scholars are reared to be the shills of the state. □

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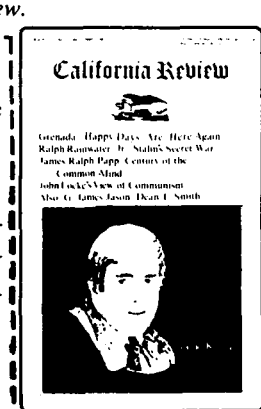

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RISE AND FALL

Milovan Djilas/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/$24.95

Stephen Miller

Yugoslavia has always been regarded as the one Communist country it is okay to like. After all, even Churchill admired Tito; during World War II he supported Tito's Partisans rather than the forces of the Chetnik leader, General Draza Mihailovic, because the Yugoslav Communists were thought to be more effective Nazi-fighters. Unlike the other Communist leaders of Eastern Europe, most of whom sat out the war in Moscow and rode to power behind Soviet tanks, the Yugoslav Communists were authentic war heroes. And in 1948 they won over many Westerners by defying Stalin and vowing to fight if the Soviets invaded the country.

On domestic issues, Yugoslav Communists have been regarded by many in the West as less doctrinaire than their Soviet bloc counterparts. The regime tolerates strikes, allows its citizens to travel abroad, and permits a somewhat more open press than is found in other Communist countries. Most important as far as the West is concerned, Tito and his heirs have often attacked Soviet imperialism, most recently the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This anti-Soviet stance has been rewarded by several American administrations with economic and military aid, including jet aircraft.

Milovan Djilas, the country's most famous dissident, would say that this image of Yugoslavia is highly misleading, even though his own status is testimony to the relatively liberal nature of Yugoslav Communism. He remains alive and well in Belgrade—subject to occasional harassment and some restrictions (he is not allowed to travel). Djilas did spend nine years in Tito's prisons in the 1950s and 1960s, but in the Soviet Union or in a Soviet bloc country such outspokenness would be rewarded either with a longer prison sentence or expulsion from the country. And no other Communist country would allow such a critic to grant interviews to Western journalists—something Djilas has continually done.

Djilas probably gets away with his criticisms because he is a world-famous figure—known not only for his writings but also by virtue of his being a very special dissident. Until he broke with the Party (in Yugoslavia called the League of Communists), he was one of Tito's closest associates, the director of Agitprop and an occasional emissary from Tito to Stalin. In the 1940s, moreover, he was an ardent Stalinist—"obsessed," as he says in his latest book, *Rise and Fall*, "with the 'perfection' of dogma." Though from the first he disliked the new regime's "banality and vulgarity," it was not until 1954 that he came to see the problem was the system itself, not simply the people running it. "With moving, irrefutable finality it dawned on me that there was no other way out of bondage to the whims of dictators and oligarchs than by the existence of another party. . . ."

Rise and Fall, however, is only in part about Djilas's break with the Party. Beginning where *Wartime*—his powerful memoir of the war years in Yugoslavia—left off, *Rise and Fall* offers an inside story about the first ten years of Communist rule in Yugoslavia, when Tito consolidated his power and then broke with Moscow. The memoir contains some arresting anecdotes of Stalin as well as some moving descriptions of Djilas's imprisonment, but it is most valuable for the light it sheds on the nature of Yugoslav Communism.

According to Djilas, Yugoslav Communism is not very different from other brands. Like other Communist leaders in Eastern Europe, Tito sliced off his opposition slowly and methodically, usually by accusing anti-Communists of collaborating with the Nazis. This "settling of accounts"—a sinister term Djilas invokes repeatedly—was worse in Yugoslavia than elsewhere in Eastern Europe, with approximately 100,000 executed.

Djilas is most outraged, however, not by the executions but by the Yugoslav Gulag of the late 1940s (created after the break with Moscow) on the island of Goli Otok, where many supposedly pro-Soviet Yugoslavs were tortured and assigned to hard labor. Because Stalin made no secret of his desire to replace the defiant Tito with a Yugoslav who would obey Moscow's dictates, Tito threw thousands into the camp without benefit of trial and on the flimsiest of pretexts: listening to short-wave radio, reading leaflets, or failing to report a conversation with someone who sounded pro-Soviet.

In a sense, it was only appropriate for Tito to erect a Gulag of his own, since the Yugoslav Communists never stopped professing their devotion to Marxism-Leninism. They merely objected to Moscow's insistence on infallibility with regard to Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The issue, as Djilas says, was "the free development of socialism as opposed to its development through the expansion of the Soviet state."

Thus, despite the break with Moscow, Tito and his comrades behaved in most respects like Communists under the Soviet yoke. They neglected Yugoslavia's agriculture while rapidly expanding its industrial base. They established a brutal secret police and made sure the judiciary followed the dictates of the Party. Yet all the while there was talk of reform. "The Communist party is not exclusively in charge here," Tito wrote. "It does not have total dominion over all things, as if it were the supreme arbiter imposing its immutable, infallible judgment on all the various problems of social life. . . ."

Tito, of course, never seriously entertained such an idea. Throughout his reign, he circulated talk of reform whenever it suited his purposes: when he wanted military or economic aid from the West, or when he wished to pose as the enlightened head of the non-aligned nations, a pragmatic and dynamic leader who was not a rigid Marxist-Leninist. But woe to anyone who seriously questioned the Party's role as "supreme arbiter." When Djilas did so, he was imprisoned.

Djilas's memoir ends with his release from prison in 1966, but his inside story ends in 1954, when he was stripped of his power. Still, *Rise and Fall* is a useful guide to contemporary Yugoslavia because the country has changed little in the past thirty years. There have been many minor reforms and even a major one—the constitution of 1974, which granted Yugoslavia's six republics considerable autonomy—but the Party remains the supreme arbiter.

Yet four years after Tito's death the Party is in trouble. The economy is in a shambles. Purchasing power has dropped some 40 percent in the past five years, the country is deeply in debt, economic growth is at a standstill. Despite such heralded reforms as workers' management, economic decisions remain the province of Party bureaucrats and economic planning continues to be dictated by ideology. Writing recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, Djilas said that "by far the most important cause of the decline of the Yugoslav economy is the inefficiency of the obsolete political system," adding that "many of the 'reformers' are not really in favor of genuine democratic reforms."

Djilas can make such charges without getting arrested—so far at least—but last year, when a relatively unknown 29-year-old university lecturer from Sarajevo accused Party members of "continually referring to democracy and freedom, while clumsily concealing that their sole aim has been to retain their privileges," he was given eight years for "counterrevolutionary activity." In a much publicized trial earlier this year, three Belgrade intellectuals who attended a private discussion group at which Djilas spoke were given prison sentences ranging from one to two years.

The trial of the Belgrade intellectuals—six in all—revealed the government's weakness, not its strength. Both foreign and domestic support for the defendants was very strong. As a result, the prosecution reduced charges against three of the defendants, dropped charges against another, and called for a separate trial for two others. Indeed, instead of squelching dissent, the trial seems to have encouraged many Yugoslavs to be more outspoken. At a recent meeting of the Serbian Academy of the Arts and Sciences, the majority of the participants called for the separation of the country's political and economic systems. They refrained, however, from calling for the end of the one-party state.

Such timidity arises from more than the fear of arrest; many Yugoslavs genuinely fear that a multi-party state would aggravate the old ethnic hatreds that still linger from the atrocities of Yugoslavia's civil war. The country is a complex ethnic mix, comprising many non-Slavic peoples as well: Hungarians in the north and Albanians in the south, for example. If the lid isn't kept on, this line of reasoning goes, the pot will boil over, and in that event the Soviet Union might find it convenient to intervene, especially if one republic invited it in at the expense of another.

Still, these lingering ethnic hatreds may have less to do with the past than with the present: Envy and resentment are bound to flourish in a political system that thrives on privileges doled out by the Party. Party control invites invidious comparisons. And this is why Yugoslavia will never follow the example set by Spain—or by Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Egypt, or Turkey.

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Djilas himself says, "The ruling Communist bureaucracy cannot even conceive of such far-reaching reforms." It is much easier for a military dictator than a Marxist-Leninist to relinquish power. Military men can set up a mechanism for free elections and then retire to their old job as soldiers—their only worry the possibility of being arrested by the new civilian government. But if a Marxist-Leninist relinquishes power, what can he become? Moreover, he not only loses power; he loses his identity—admitting by his act that the ideology which shored up his privileged existence was a lie. At a recent conference of high Party officials—Yugoslav Communists, it seems, are addicted to conferences—a leading Party spokesman said that "despite very severe criticism of and even pronounced dissatisfaction with the situation in the Party and in society in general, the value of our [1941-1945] revolution" has been confirmed.

The inability of the Party to move towards genuine democratization bodes ill for Yugoslavia's future. According to one observer, the current economic crisis coupled with nationalist agitation may result in a mass uprising in the near future. If dissent really does get out of control, the Party will probably look to the Soviet Union for economic and possibly even military aid. The Soviet Union would help, but of course for a price—at the very least extensive use of Yugoslav ports for the Soviet navy. Most Yugoslav Communists would prefer not to move closer to Moscow, but if they want to stay in power they have nowhere else to turn. As it stands now, the Yugoslavs are dependent on the Soviet Union for almost half their oil, and the Soviet Union is their biggest trading partner. From Yugoslavia, then, we can expect closer ties with Moscow. For the melancholy truth is that Communist regimes can only be changed—changed significantly, that is—through revolution. □

LOVE, ANARCHY, AND EMMA GOLDMAN: A BIOGRAPHY
Candace Falk/Holt, Rinehart & Winston/$25.00
EMMA GOLDMAN: AN INTIMATE LIFE
Alice Wexler/Pantheon/$19.95

Don Herzog

What is being famous like? The allure of the question is obvious enough: We ingest great buckets of journalistic slop in our burning desire to find out what celebrities are really like. Do they pick their toenails in private? Do they fight with their spouses and have affairs? Do they hate puppies? Do they have seborrhea? Do they worry about dying? We may be moved by idle curiosity—it's nice to have something to read on the supermarket checkout line—but there are less commendable motives at work here, too. Finding out that great stars also suffer soothes any sullen resentment we might have about our anonymous lot. They're no better off than we are, after all.

Journalists (real and so-called) aren't the only ones who can pander to our interest in these matters. Historians too get a shot. We pay them to read other people's mail, an enterprise placing not only them in a morally dubious position. In most histories, we can find a revealing vignette chosen to explain, say, just how FDR could brashly claim that he didn't care about the economic implications of Social Security. Typically, historians provide a quick glimpse of the personalities and then move back to their somber narratives.

When historians write biographies, though, they devote themselves to giving us more than a revealing glimpse. They want to provide us something quite different from the lurid headline, something less gossipy, more revealing, more illuminating. Serious people read biographies, and not just because they'd be embarrassed to be caught with some sleazy tabloid.

So historians do not publish biographies of the likes of Michael Jackson; popular as he may be, his life doesn't illuminate much of anything. Instead historians seek out figures who can profoundly illuminate their days—and, they often hope, our own. They seek out figures like Emma Goldman, the notorious anarchist blamed for everything from labor strikes to the death of President McKinley, the indefatigable firebrand who pushed birth control in America, vainly argued with Lenin for freedom in fledgling Soviet Russia, and hauled off to Spain in her sixties to help the doomed anarchists of the civil war. Goldman's life is not only enticingly colorful; properly handled, it could speak to many contemporary concerns. What counted as legitimate political activity in early twentieth-century America? What counts today? Is anarchism a defensible political theory? What are the travails of a spurned and detested radical? What would a genuinely autonomous human life look like?

Such questions are manifestly different from those about toenails and seborrhea. Their interest explains why we have two new biographies of Goldman: Candace Falk's *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman: A Biography*, and Alice Wexler's *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life*.

In 1975, Candace Falk, then a graduate student in history, stumbled on the sort of find every young historian dreams about: a collection of unpublished and apparently important letters from Emma Goldman to Ben Reitman, self-styled hobo, medical doctor, and sociologist. Goldman was Reitman's lover for some ten years; he organized her lecture tours, worked at *Mother Earth*, her journal, and was abundantly unfaithful to her. Goldman's treatment of the relationship in her autobiography makes it clear that she always found Reitman irresistibly attractive and often found him a nuisance and a threat.

But the letters Falk found made their relationship much more vivid. In part, they revealed just how steamy a sexual relationship this was: Goldman assured Reitman that no other man had ever given her such pleasure, and the two exchanged concretely erotic fantasies in their longing absences. And in part, the letters revealed just how wrenching an emotional relationship this was: Goldman was Reitman's "blue-eyed Mommy," his supplicant lover, his angry teacher and pleading comrade, and through it all she felt helpless in her morbid dependency on him. Goldman's anarchist friends endured Reitman, some making little secret of their contempt for him.

These letters became the centerpiece of Falk's study of Goldman. Her book is over 600 pages long, with over 500 pages of text, and she explores in tireless detail every thrust, parry, and turn of this sadly tormenting relationship. "I suffer, I suffer like Hell," Goldman wrote to Reitman in 1910; Falk has left no archival stone unturned in documenting that suffering. Fights, reconciliations, brief and elusive periods of harmony, and more fights: The cycle is relentless.

Goldman did eventually wrest free of Reitman's compelling hold, but he continues to surface in this book long after their breakup. Like other old lovers, the two exchanged sometimes maudlin, more often petty and manipulative, letters. Goldman learned that she could wound Reitman with a well-chosen word; he was devastated by what he took to be her dreadfully uncharitable account of their relationship in her autobiography, and wrote a string of pathetically plaintive letters bemoaning his poor lot, or threatening with transparent bravado that she would ride into history on his coattails.

Not just Reitman, but all of Goldman's other lovers—barring some new find—crowd the pages of this book. None of Goldman's affairs was particularly happy. She may have tried consummating a relationship with a prostitute drawn to her, but lesbian relationships, she decided, were not for her. She tried to get one old friend and lover to leave what she saw as his sterile, conventional marriage for her, but he refused. Magically in love again toward the very end of her life, Goldman was even told by her last lover that he was somehow compulsively attracted to overweight women.

There is a serious reason for charting every contour of Goldman's movingly sad private life; Falk did not set out to write a racy gossip column. Feminists have been increasingly concerned with the links between private and public life, or, as they more often put it, between the personal and the political. Falk wants to puzzle over the apparent gap between a woman who publicly insisted on free love and human autonomy, but who privately and despairingly submitted to a series of destructive relationships.

But Falk fails the reader, and one could pile up incidental objections. Reproduced letters simply swallow this book; too often, Falk's text only loosely stitches together the letters she quotes. There is a problem with false advertising: Reitman is too prominent, and Alexander Berkman, Goldman's lifelong comrade, far too subordinate, for this to be simply a biography. The book is too long for what it is: Goldman's plight is first moving, then pathetic, then tiresome, and finally dull; and no one is served by dragging out the story of human suffering until it is dull. Falk takes too many psychological peeps into Goldman's head. She says, for example, that after Berkman's suicide, "Nothing short of an actual war could bring Emma out of the depths of mourning." What could possibly count as evidence for or against that claim? Goldman's public life is too tidy in Falk's hands. Much of her autobiography is devoted to her struggle to figure out whether the USSR was heaven or hell, but here she

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effortlessly turns against the new regime in a mere nine pages. Falk too readily repeats puzzling anarchist formulations without critically probing them.

All these flaws would be excusable if Falk had some argument to make. Astonishingly, though, she doesn't even begin to develop an account of what the links are between the personal and the political; a skimpy three pages close the book with some remarkably vague observations. By proceeding this way, Falk hasn't deepened our insight into any theoretical question surrounding anarchism or feminism. Instead she has presented a lengthy and bleak account of one woman's suffering. The famous, it seems, are no different from you and me—only they have more fame.

Alice Wexler's biography is also flawed. Wexler too peeps into Goldman's head: "It was almost as if Goldman, who had felt deeply unloved and unwanted as a child, could not as an adult believe that she really deserved to be loved or that anyone could possibly love her," one typical specimen, betrays a professional restraint overcome by easy Freudianizing. Curiously, Wexler's tale comes to an end with Goldman's 1919 deportation to Russia. No doubt it is possible to write a good biography without covering the whole life: Albert Jay Nock's *Jefferson* is perfectly serviceable, and Nock diligently avoided dwelling on anything we already knew about Jefferson. But here the end is abrupt and unexpected, "almost as if" Wexler ran out of steam. And she too repeats anarchist slogans and ideas as though they were crystal clear.

Wexler has some powerful insights, but she is oddly guarded about developing and defending them. Her observations and arguments are far too compressed. One would think that historians were taught that objectivity precludes making arguments about the points of their stories. Stories, though, don't tell themselves; they need active narrators. And if they are to be illuminating, they need more of a structure than simple chronology offers.

Still, Wexler's book is much better than Falk's, even if it could be more theoretical. Wexler's prose is economical and precise; her book, while only about half as long as Falk's, contains more. Despite her book's titillating subtitle—the marketing ploy of some fiend at the publisher's?—Wexler disciplines her use of the correspondence. In her hands, the people surrounding Goldman are more richly alive, the swirl of events more densely textured, the life more believable. It may be only a story, but it makes a much better story than Falk's book does. (It's better too, for that matter, than Richard Drinnon's 1961 biography of Goldman, *Rebel in Paradise*.) If you are going to rush out and buy two books on Emma Goldman this should be one of them.

The other is Goldman's *Living My Life*, still, as I suppose all her devotees and commentators would agree, the best guide to her life—and theoretically the most provocative. Falk suggests that *Living My Life* isn't self-critical; but Goldman tells a trenchantly self-critical story, one bursting with implications about personal and political life. The best opening to that story is provided by Alexander Berkman.

Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* commences with a review of his decision to shoot Henry Clay Frick and so jolt fearful workers into revolutionary action. Apparently without irony or detachment, Berkman writes: "Could anything be nobler than to die for a grand, a sublime Cause?" He hoped to have "neither personal interests nor desires above the necessities of the Cause," frankly embracing the loss of personal identity the pose suggests: "My own individuality is entirely in the background; aye, I am not conscious of any personality in matters pertaining to the Cause." And though his fourteen years in prison tempered his fiercely abstract devotion to violence, he remained a self-styled tool of history. On his release, he saluted the readers of *Mother Earth* by insisting that he would still "devote all my energies and whatever ability I may have to that noblest of all causes of a new, regenerated and free humanity."

Goldman was initially fired by Berkman's brand of radicalism, but she quickly came to distance herself. Advised one night at a party that "it did not behoove an agitator to dance," she flared up, urging that the anarchist goal of absolute freedom could not mean "the denial of life and joy." Berkman, "his eyes full of reproach," stood nearby, "and I checked myself. I danced no more that evening." Later, though, she would not stop dancing. When Berkman contemptuously dismissed Reitman, Goldman again flared up, attacking Berkman as "a zealot" who "judge[d] human quality by your criterion of one's value to the Cause. . . . " Far from forcing him to surrender his desire to be an instrument of history, Berkman's jail term enabled him to continue brandishing wooden formulas that Goldman, with her vibrant life, had found sterile.

Yet Goldman, in her own way, prostrated herself before anarchism. She insisted that it was her "beautiful ideal," and kept it on a pedestal. Goldman, in a word, was in love with anarchism: That is the implicit point of her autobiography.

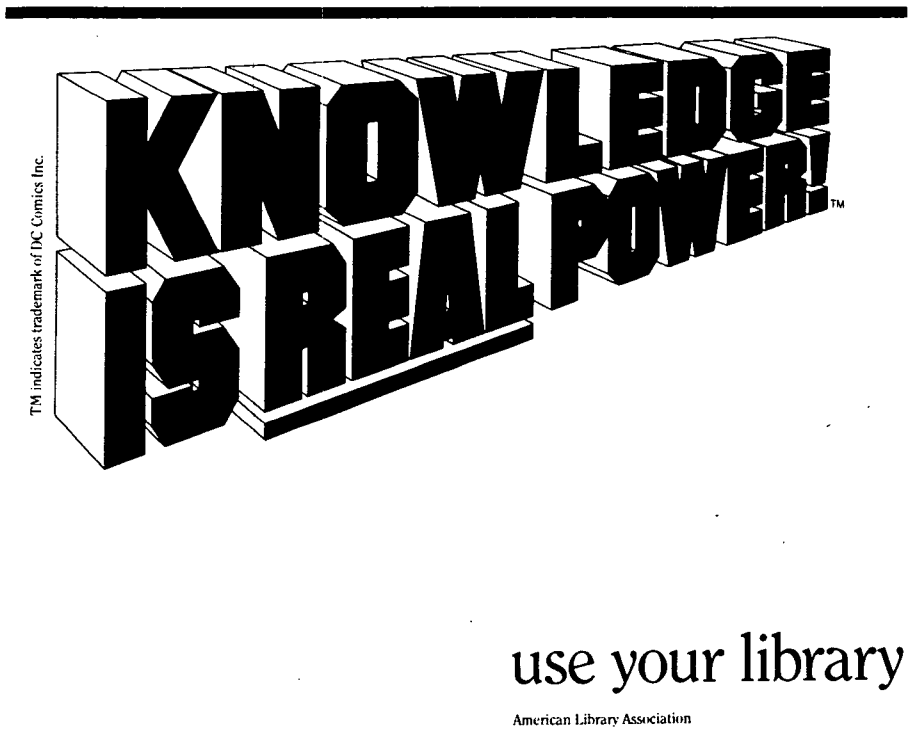
That Goldman loved anarchism, that she was prone to sighing and swooning over its glorious beauty, is, I would argue, the key to understanding her career. Goldman's refusal to offer any blueprints of an anarchist society—we ought not "fetter the future," she held, and besides we are so mystified that "our most vivid imagination can not foresee the potentialities of a race set free from external restraints"—gave anarchism all the extra titillation of mystery. Anarchism, that ghostly unknown, became the counterpoint to all that was sordid and disappointing in the actual world.

Her beloved anarchism was also too pure ever to be implicated in any undesirable results. Given her politics, she found her deportation to the USSR exhilarating: She was, like so many joyous pilgrims before her, fleeing to the new world. But her terrifically high hopes were frustrated. Instead of freedom and spontaneity, Goldman found regimentation and consolidation of power in the demonic hands of Lenin. Was there perhaps something wrong with revolution? No; revolution was to usher in anarchism, and so it had to be good. One's loved one is always good. Instead, Goldman decided that "the Russian Revolution and the communist state are as far apart as the poles." Lenin and his henchmen betrayed the revolution; they besmirched the precious name of her beloved anarchism. That sense of betrayal can help explain the amazing zeal with which Goldman assaulted Soviet atrocities years before others on the left were willing to budge.

So when Goldman writes that most of her public life was "spent in chasing windmills, in trying to present to the world an ideal which to me contains all the beauty and wonder there is in life," her stance seems not so different from Berkman's after all. Both were talented and resourceful individuals bent on making themselves the tools of their own political ends. (That stance, I need hardly note, is not unique to leftists.) Feminists are fond of saying that the personal *is* political, by which they mean that our daily relations are appropriate subjects of political criticism. Goldman managed to equate the personal and the political in another and decidedly unattractive way. It's not that her affairs reflected her anarchist principles; they didn't. It's rather that she fell in love with anarchism.

Hers is a bizarre tale; yet it is, in a phrase she adopted from Nietzsche, "human, all too human." Readers of all political stripes have found something compelling about Goldman's life. Even the grand old curmudgeon himself, H.L. Mencken, surely no political ally, made a place for her in the *American Mercury*, and himself saluted her and Berkman in the twenties.

We still need a first-rate biography of Goldman. Its author will have to engage Goldman's theories head-on, and ask for example just what it would mean for men and women to meet "big and strong and free," why her anarchism was so explicitly elitist, and whether the "free unfoldment" of children offers an attractive or even viable educational program. And its author will need to develop an argument about the significance of her life. In the meantime, we have Goldman's autobiography, a wonderfully incisive book. □



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HILAIRE BELLOC: A BIOGRAPHY

A.N. Wilson/Atheneum/$17.95

Franz M. Oppenheimer

A book about Hilaire Belloc published in 1916 described him as "the greatest writer of English prose since Dryden," John Buchan said of Belloc "that no man had written purer and nobler verse in the great tradition," and the author of Belloc's authorized biography, Robert Speaight, wrote that the first thirty-eight pages of Belloc's biography of Robespierre "deserve to rank among the finest historical essays in the English language." Throughout his long life Hilaire Belloc was befriended and received by the famous: prime ministers, cardinals, field marshals, Popes, princes, Mussolini, H. G. Wells, the King of Belgium, G. B. Shaw, and even Evelyn Waugh. His reputation was particularly high among English-speaking Roman Catholics. While unlike his friend G. K. Chesterton he made few converts, he was the most visible and belligerent defender of the Roman Catholic faith in the English intellectual establishment.

A. N. Wilson's recent biography of Belloc makes it difficult to understand such high renown. Wilson's view of Belloc is the one a man has of himself when he wakes up with a hangover at three in the morning. But apart from enlarging the negatives, Wilson tells us little that was not told us more appealingly by Speaight.[1]

Hilaire Belloc was born a French citizen in France, in 1870, of a French father and an English mother. His father died two years later. From then on Belloc led what Wilson calls "a double life" of constant moves between France and England. He did his military service in the French artillery, and he became a British subject only afterwards in his twenties. Up to early manhood he believed his family to be rich, only to find himself poor, so that financing his studies at Oxford became a problem. In England he was a Catholic among Protestants. At Oxford he failed to win a fellowship either in All Souls or his own College, Balliol, an award he felt himself entitled to on the strength of his brilliant career as an undergraduate, marked by a First in Modern History and the Presidency of the Oxford Union. Worse was to come: He did not even succeed in obtaining the mere lectureship he sought. Yet lecturers were then considered at Oxford "a lower order of creation." This failure "was something from which he never recovered" and his disappointment over it became "a lasting, festering wound."[2]

All his life Belloc blamed these failures on anti-Catholicism. Wilson concedes that Belloc may have raised a few eyebrows by placing a statue of Our Lady on his desk during examinations, but makes clear that it was not Belloc's religion but his bad manners which did him in. "If [at his trial-dinner for the fellowship at All Souls] he had behaved with politeness, and not shouted, nor drunk too much, nor tried to hog the conversation, it would have been the only meal in his life at which he adopted such unnatural behavior. The sad truth is that they did not like him much, and did not want him to join their club."

Belloc had not conceived of any but an academic career, and became a freelance writer and journalist by necessity. His few regular editorial appointments ended in disaster, always because of his irresponsibility and inability to work with others. His longest stint was as literary editor of the *Morning Post* where he stayed from the age of 35 to 40, when his departure became inevitable. "Since Belloc's visits to his office had become increasingly rare, and since he did nothing about the Literary Page of which he was nominally in charge," the paper's editor asked Belloc to write a weekly column. Belloc refused to do so unless paid an editor's salary. To his surprise, his ultimatum was rejected. Belloc's editorship of a new paper, *The Eye Witness*, which Wilson calls "the most exciting journalistic venture of the Edwardian period," lasted six months. And Belloc's last venture as an editor, shareholder, and a director of *The Illustrated Review*, a new monthly magazine started in 1923, was an even greater debacle, again because Belloc virtually washed his hands of it from the very beginning.

The lack of any fixed employment or regular income affected Belloc's family life, since he had to rely for his living on fees from lectures and royalties from articles and books. He traveled ceaselessly to give lectures, including several tours in the United States, and to research his histories and biographies. A psychotherapist would wonder whether Belloc's absences were entirely or even principally due to "the dread necessity of earning bread" that had beset Peter Goole, one of the heroes of Belloc's *Cautionary Verses*. Speaight does not seem to question that motivation. Wilson does, not by any literary psychoanalyzing, but by dwelling in far greater detail than Speaight on Belloc's marriage.

Belloc met his future wife, Elodie, a first-generation American-Irish girl of 22, in London when he was 20. Soon they were deeply in love, but on the strong advice of Belloc's mother they did not become engaged. A year later Belloc pursued his love to California, only to run into strong opposition to a marriage from Elodie's Irish mother and relations. Still, Elodie wanted to marry him, and although she toyed with a religious vocation, with a little more determination Belloc would almost certainly have prevailed over those not uncommon obstacles. Such determination was clearly lacking. Belloc left for the East Coast, leaving a heartbroken girl behind who "with a most revealing misquotation" of Tennyson cried:

He cometh not, she said,
I would that I were wed![3]

[1]Wilson relies heavily on Speaight's *The Life of Hilaire Belloc* (1957): There are 75 footnote references to it, one for every five pages. Yet Wilson, astonishingly, does not even mention Speaight in his ackowledgements, nor does he explain why he thought a new biography desirable.

Franz M. Oppenheimer, a frequent contributor, is a Washington lawyer.

[2] Unless indicated otherwise, all quotations are from Wilson.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF 1986 FELLOWSHIP AND GRANT COMPETITION

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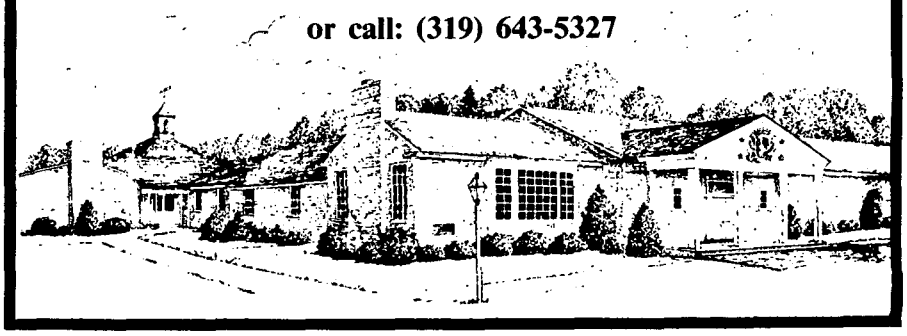

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Belloc returned to Europe and to his military service in France. Four years later, Elodie did enter a convent, but could stand it only for a month. An "emotional collapse" followed. After another year Belloc came back to California (accompanied by his mother), and finally, after six years, Elodie and he were married.

Apart from their extreme puritanism, which certainly did not help, there can be no doubt that there were more than the usual sources of conflict between the Bellocs. The bride suddenly found herself in a milieu of English upper-class intellectuals to which Belloc wanted her to conform. He taught her to get rid of her American accent and speak like an upper-class English woman, even though he had earlier affected a French accent at Oxford. And while Hilaire and Elodie were both unswervingly orthodox in their Catholic faith, Hilaire's steely doctrinal compliance was an intellectual's defense against doubts. "By my nature, I am all skeptical and sensual—so much so as hardly to understand how others believe unseen things or do violence to their inclinations," he wrote to Lady Lovat when he was 68. By contrast, Elodie's orthodoxy was the blessed and non-intellectual inheritance of the American-Irish. There can be no doubt that Hilaire never consciously questioned his wife's doctrinal inflexibility; indeed he loudly, and often, professed to share it. But he must have done so at some cost. And I see this hidden conflict as at least one of the reasons why, in a not untypical year of the marriage, Hilaire Belloc spent no more than five out of 52 weeks at home with his wife and children.

Catholicism stood in the center of Belloc's life, the post-Vatican I Catholicism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a Catholicism difficult to remember. Leo XIII and Pius X, the Popes of that period, "condemned the notion that Moses had not written the five books of the Pentateuch (including the description of his own death); the idea that the pains of hell were not physical; the theory of evolution; the use of the electric light; and . . . the ideas of the French Revolution."

The last of these condemnations must have been the most disagreeable to the young Belloc, who revered the French Revolution and agitated against royalty and nobility. But whatever the difficulties of his creed, he turned them into a pattern of rigidity that would have been anathema to the Catholicism of Vatican II. For instance, he sought to attend Mass every day, but as Speaight tells us, "if a priest took more than twenty minutes over his Mass, he suspected him of modernism." What mattered to him was to be physically present at Mass. Once there, he paid little attention to the liturgy; he might interrupt the priest or ask a neighbor in a loud voice whether there was a telephone in the sacristy. He rarely took communion, but he always carried a rosary. St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa of Avila, and "all this 'union with God' business" and "the necessary night of the soul" disgusted him "like Wagner's music or boiled mutton." In one possibly apocryphal remark he came close to blasphemy: "I revere him," he is reported to have said of Christ, "because I am instructed to by the Church, but personally I find him repellent. The fellow was a milksop." He was even harder on St. Paul. "The old Yid (saving His Holy Office) had a most turgid and muddy mind." With that outlook on the New Testament, it is not surprising that he had even less use for the Old. He called it "Yiddish folklore" and regarded it "for the most part, as an unedifying piece of tribal mythology."

These difficulties with Holy Writ had their source in Belloc's anti-Semitism, of which the reviewers of Wilson have made much—I believe too much. To understand Belloc's preoccupation with the Jews one must know something about the temper of the times. When Belloc did his service in the French artillery in 1891-92, a hysterical, vicious tide of anti-Semitism, which would soon lead to the Dreyfus case, had begun to come in. The depth and popular reach of that tide have all but been forgotten. None of the authors who have been tracing the roots of Hitler to German anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century seems to be aware of the calls to genocide sounding throughout France during that period; nor does the average university-educated American or European know anything about them. The worst of those early signals for a "final solution" in France is that they came largely from the French Catholic clergy—the *Stürmer* of the period was the newspaper *La Croix*, published by the Assumptionist fathers—and that, moreover, Roman Catholic teaching of the times was in tune with those horrors. To quote Wilson: "The Roman Catholic Church had not revoked" the decree of Pope Eugenius IV of 1442 "that from now on and for all time, Christians shall not eat or drink with Jews nor admit them to feasts, nor cohabit with them, nor bathe with them." And while France at that time was the most concentrated furnace of anti-Semitism, the rest of Europe and the United States were hardly in a position to feel much superior. In England, "there had grown up a whole literary generation who were unashamedly hostile to the Jews. Buchan, Kipling, and Rupert Brooke all loathed and feared them." And by the 1920s, American anti-Semitism had become all pervasive.

By contrast Belloc's silly views seem benign. He shared the Zionist conviction that Jews were a different people, inherently incapable of becoming Englishmen or Frenchmen. He shared some of Disraeli's wilder notions about the secret dominance of Jewish elites. He thought Jewish financiers had bought all people in British public life. But he had compassion for poor Jews, he had good personal relations with Jews and close Jewish friends, and not only did he not think of himself as an anti-Semite, he was scandalized when he encountered destructive anti-Semitism in his later years. Speaight quotes from a letter written from the United States in 1923:

> The Jew question is a fearful bore over here. People talk of it morning, noon and night. Those who know I have written a book on it take it for granted that I am in approval of a general massacre—which is the usual extreme confusion. . . . All . . . everywhere rave and howl against the Jews. . . . It makes the life of the mass of Jews here—who are poor—very hard. Magistrates are . . . biased against them—they are insulted in public and refused entry to Clubs and even hotels, and in general made to feel that they are enemies.

These are not lines written in approval. Wilson tells us that Belloc "was loud and outspoken of his condemnation of the [Nazi] butchers and persecutors, and furious with those, such as the Pope, who kept silent when the Nazi outrages began."

Belloc's lifelong obsession with the Jews, though absurd, was no more sophomoric than his political and economic ideas in general. Those ideas were deeply affected by his four years in the House of Commons where he discovered to his apparent astonishment that MPs and political leaders were human and given to such sinful practices as compromise. He was particularly scandalized by the ties of friendship and consanguinity among the leaders of both parties from which he concluded that collusion was the rule of the game, and that "parliaments are the negation of democracy." It is quite obvious from Belloc's biographers that Belloc came to despise parliaments because the House of Commons had treated him with no more deference or rapt attention than it gave to other freshman MPs and because the party leaders determine policies among themselves. In short, Belloc could not hack it in the Commons for the same reason that he could not do so at Oxford or on editorial boards: He could not and would not play on a team.

Belloc's biographers blame his dependency on writing books to make a living for the flaws of most of those books, but I doubt whether this explanation goes to the root of the trouble. Even his more successful books like *The Cruise of the Nona* I find unreadable. The reason lies far more in the same self-centeredness that ruined Belloc's career as a politician and journalist. Belloc's prose attacks like a sledgehammer gone awry. It overwhelms the reader with Belloc's convictions, prejudices, likes and dislikes, and carries the implied threat that any dissenter will be held in contempt. In Belloc's historical and biographical writings this "reader-be-damned" approach manifests itself in the absence of any documentation of sources by footnotes or bibliographies. We are expected to accept Belloc on faith alone. Yet the necessary faith is hard to come by if we know that he wrote his biography of James II—"a spirited, ludicrously biased" potboiler of 75,000 words—in eight days, and dictated his biography of Milton in ten days—and then had his secretary send it to the publisher without his having read the typescript.

The same self-centeredness made Belloc to consider himself, as by the divine right of his French birth, the final authority on France and all things French, even though, as Speaight tells us, he had surprisingly few friends in France, and there were huge gaps in his readings of French literature and in his knowledge of French art. He was no John Russell. For the same reason, so Wilson tells us, he learned nothing from travel, or new experiences. To all these negatives Wilson adds that Belloc was "extremely dirty," rude, "beery, smoky, unpleasant." As one of his grandchildren said, "In our family, we don't take baths." He certainly drank too much, and there is at least the implication in Wilson's book that in his sad later years as a widower, he may have been an alcoholic.

Yet for all these dreary assessments, Wilson leaves room for frequent glimmers of another Belloc, that of a lovable great man. The one work that reflects that lovable great man is the light poetry collected in the volume *Cautionary Verses*, which has accompanied thousands from their childhood to old age and without which Hilaire Belloc would now be forgotten. It is the author of the *Cautionary Verses* of whom Wilson can say that it is "impossible to chronicle . . . all his friendships." His family and friends "loved

[3]Lord Tennyson's Mariana said "dead."

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him almost in spite of, rather than because of, what he said." He was loyal: "In taking up with new friends [he] never dropped the old. . . . He lost almost no friends in the course of his life, except through death." Many of them gave him a dinner on his 60th birthday at which G. K. Chesterton addressed his friend with this quotation of Sir William Watson's:

Nor without honour my days ran
Nor yet without a boast shall end;
For I was Shakespeare's countryman
And were not you my friend?"

The living presence of the man who could inspire such a tribute is not captured by his biographers; they record some of the evidence but fail to bring it to life. □

SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS:
REFLECTIONS ON PHYSICS AS A WAY OF LIFE
K.C. Cole/Morrow/$16.95

Mitchell S. Ross

Late in his life, looking back upon his conquest of cosmic equations, Albert Einstein noted: "The road to this paradise was not so comfortable and alluring as the road to the religious paradise; but it has proved itself as trustworthy, and I have never regretted having chosen it." I would hope that this declaration by a genuine genius might reassure such personalities as the Rev. Graham, the Rev. Falwell, the Rev. Jackson, and all the other reverent reverends. Certainly it has reassured me.

I cannot recall any time when, in an adulthood filled with strenuous thought and numerous troubles, I have felt the slightest inclination to submit my mind to the sort of certitude offered by organized religion. Even those happenings in my life that can be termed supernatural are for me best explained in terms of the natural universe. Far from clarifying our current miseries and mysteries, the reliance upon religious explanations of events tends merely to darken what is already obscure; to vote for ignorance, or at least innocence, over knowledge; to resist enlightenment.

"The most beautiful emotion we can have," wrote Einstein, "is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed. It was the experience of mystery—even if mixed with fear—that engendered religion. A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, our perceptions of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which only in their most primitive forms are accessible to our minds—it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute true religiosity; in this sense, and in this alone, I am a deeply religious man. I cannot conceive of a God who rewards and punishes his creatures, or has a will of the kind that we experience in ourselves. Neither can I or would I want to conceive of an individual that survives its physical death; let feeble souls, from fear or absurd egoism, cherish such thoughts. I am satisfied with the mystery of the eternity of life and with the awareness and a glimpse of the marvelous structure of the existing world, together with the devoted striving to comprehend a portion, be it ever so tiny, of the Reason that manifests itself in nature."

I am not a physicist, and, despite my devotion to reason, I am relatively innocent of mathematical logic. That is why I am particularly grateful to K.C. Cole for the composition of *Sympathetic Vibrations,* a book that explains in layman's language many of the things that physicists have learned about the universe over the years. This book is even better than Bertrand Russell's *The ABC of Relativity.* Apart from his political excursions, Russell thought more clearly about more subjects than possibly anyone in the twentieth century. There is, however, a mathematical chill in his exposition of Einstein's theories that prevents someone unmathematical from developing any enthusiasm for the universe that physicists have mapped out. "I suggest that an emotion which can be destroyed by a little mathematics is neither very genuine nor very valuable," Russell wrote. I agree with him, but unless the mathematics can be rendered in verbal form, I cannot expect to understand it.

Sympathetic Vibrations humanizes physics, which Einstein himself did to some extent. This certainly represents a step in the right direction. "Does everything around you seem to be falling apart?" Miss Cole begins. "(In physics, the term used to describe the increasing disorder in the universe is entropy.) Does it seem to take a monumental effort to get going on a new task, or break the bonds of old habits? (Your problem might have something to do with inertia.) Does time seem sometimes to fly? At other times to stand still? (Time is actually a lot more flexible than most of us think—both psychologically and physically.) Do you feel at times totally in tune with your job, your friends, your generation? At other times irritatingly discordant? (One way to look at it is the physical principle of resonance.) Does it frustrate you when the same event or conversation is interpreted in different ways by different people? (Perception is in the eye of the beholder.) Do you find yourself agreeing with both sides of irreconcilable arguments? (Complementarity also explains how light can be both waves and particles.)"

These are simple, reasonable ways of explaining complicated phenomena. They reflect centuries of scientific research that the reverends virtuously ignore as they proceed with their pious piffle. What, it may be asked, have the laws of the physical universe to do with the Biblical exhortations of preachers? They render them somewhat ridiculous, is what. Mathematical certitude runs its own risks. Cole quotes Niels Bohr saying to Einstein: "You are not thinking. You are merely being logical." So may we say to the reverends: "You are not thinking. You are merely preaching."

Those who are unable to interpret the quality of life except in terms of the

Mitchell S. Ross is author of The Literary Politicians *and* An Invitation to Our Times.

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Bible (which is the work of different authors, interpreting life in various ways over many generations) are engaged in an act of reduction which itself reduces the quality of life for those who are unwilling to accept them at their word.

The work of mathematicians and physicists makes it possible—indeed, necessary—for intelligent human beings to acknowledge the value of perspectives other than those offered by ancient historical and theological writings. Now, as Cole notes, "anyone who has sat through a typical physics class and suffered through pulleys and inclined planes has a right to be turned off for life." Yet, "willy-nilly, even the most esoteric aspects of science affect us all, almost all the time. Gravity, electricity, and even nuclear forces work on us constantly. Even such elementary constituents of atoms as quarks and the rarely seen and elusive W particles have more to do with our daily lives than we usually think."

If I were to drink too much wine with my dinner tonight and then proceed to stumble down a flight of stairs, the reverends would be inclined to say that God was punishing me for being bad, or that such misfortune might be avoided in the future if I were to accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior. Such a statement could be said to have impact on me. "If you throw out a compliment or a threat," Cole writes, "you exert a force on someone. Sometimes it has the nature of a discrete event, or particle. . . . When two particles interact with each other, they exchange energy and/or momentum. This is exactly what happens when you stub your toe. The energy from the egg you ate this morning (which came from the sun by way of the chicken that ate the corn that absorbed the sun and then laid the egg) is converted into the electrical energy of nerves which is converted into the kinetic (or motion) energy of your muscles. When your toe hits the doorsill, some of that energy is exchanged with the doorsill. The energy of your kick heats up the molecules in the doorsill, and the doorsill kicks back some of the energy in the form of pressure you feel as pain."

If someone is nice, the reverends would say that such an individual is a good Christian. However, as Cole writes, "the fact that you inherit stable genes from your parents is based on the inherent stability of the quantum states of the molecules that make up DNA. The hardness of the metal that makes up my typewriter, the softness of my baby's skin, the scent of flowers wafting in through the window—all are consequences of the quantum states of atoms. Tell that to the next person who thinks that quantum mechanics is something farfetched and far removed from the stuff of everyday life!" Whereas the theological or ideological mind insists on seeing things in the light of some sacred text, "the equations of relativity provide a kind of language—or better, a dictionary—that translates from one frame of reference into another. They allow you to begin at your point of view and move step by step to somebody else's. It is a Rosetta stone for frames of reference. Would that the simultaneous translations at the United Nations had such a facility! For what relativity means is that everybody can agree on the facts of a situation—even though everybody sees the problem from a vastly different point of view."

This is a heartening message. It provides in Einsteinian physics a justification for democratic government and a rational basis for the resolution of the problems facing humanity. It encourages one to hope that Marxists can become sensible, and that intellectuals who assail moral relativism can understand the context in which they inveigh. Einstein wrote to his colleague, Max Born, in 1944: "You believe in the dice-playing god, and I in the perfect rule of law in a world of something objectively existing which I try to catch in a wildly speculative way. I hope that somebody will find a more realistic way, or a more tangible foundation for such a conception than that which is given to me. The great initial success of quantum theory cannot convert me to believe in that fundamental game of dice."

They were both right, of course; much as Einstein himself did not destroy Newtonian physics, but improved upon it. As Cole says, in her motherly way, "Despite all odds, flowers bloom in the desert and children bloom in slums." And, as I know from my experience as a baseball umpire, you cannot play the game if you have no respect for the rules.

I am grateful to K.C. Cole (who is in turn grateful to the late Frank Oppenheimer, director of the Exploratorium in San Francisco) for the physics lesson. She does make a few errors that need to be corrected. One is the identification of Edmund Burke as a "British Prime Minister." Edmund Burke was not a Prime Minister. Then there is the declaration, "I never heard of a national population that didn't consider its own political ideas as normal and proper, and everybody else's somewhat skewed." East of the Elbe and throughout the dictatorships of the so-called Third World are people who yearn for the freedom of democratic life and would sacrifice much in order to attain it.

Finally, there is this remarkably silly statement: "The real trouble with words is that they automatically embody images, whether we recognize this or not. Take the word 'wave,' for example. It is almost impossible to think of a wave without conjuring up an image of something that looks like a water wave." No, if you mention the word "wave" to me, I am as likely to think of fans at a sporting event rising from their seats and throwing up their arms, or an individual greeting me by flapping his hand. And why is it troublesome for words to embody images? Had K.C. Cole not used words—and used them well— I would know nothing whatever about physics, and I would be much the poorer. K.C. needs to study some history and to know more about this world. I, having been improved by her book about the dailiness of cosmological concerns, am moved to recall the Robert Frost poem I used to sing in chorus as a schoolboy, with music by Randall Thompson:

O Star (the fairest one in sight)
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud—
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says "I burn."
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremite,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Warmth through stoicism. May we all be blessed. □

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ROADSIDE EMPIRES: HOW THE CHAINS FRANCHISED AMERICA

Stan Luxenberg/Viking/$17.95

Richard Starr

Who could know that, when given a land which flows with milk and honey, people would buy homogenized milk in cardboard cartons and processed honey with the comb removed? There is no mistaking deprivation, but abundance can be downright bewildering.

In a variation on this theme, Stan Luxenberg wants to know: Do people truly hunger for Big Macs? He is not the first to take on the empire of the golden arches. Children, especially, have been known to whisper about kangaroo meat and wormburgers. But Luxenberg distinguishes himself by taking the broader view where others have only picked nits. McDonald's, he insists, is responsible for the vassalization of large portions of the citizenry, the brainwashing of hordes more, the Americanization of the globe, and the Third Worldization of America. Such an unpretty picture of the golden arches strains credulity, but Luxenberg's evidence for it fills 313 pages in *Roadside Empires: How the Chains Franchised America*.

Luxenberg hit the road three years ago to discover the America of franchised businesses. He found an astounding number of chains—campgrounds, muffler shops, beauty salons, tanning parlors, dry cleaners, filling stations, motels, dental clinics, real estate brokerages, fast food outlets—whose only distinction is that, whether in Oklahoma or California, Florida or New York, they are indistinguishable. But it is the burger business that alarms him most of all.

In the fast-food outlets, Luxenberg finds a new underclass: workers, mostly school-age, who are forced to perform boring tasks at dizzying speed. These poorly-paid, highly-harassed burger flippers are, as one expert observes, "under a lot of time pressure." Moreover, their jobs prevent them from forming meaningful relationships with adults, and "most of [their] income is spent on . . . cars, records, extra clothes, cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana."

Richard Starr is assistant book editor at the Washington Times.

It is of no consolation to Luxenberg that "the average worker quits after four months," and that "fast food has the highest turnover of any industry." What might be seen as the good sense of the worker who quits turns out to be a manifestation of the appalling shortsightedness of the captains of franchising. In Luxenberg's analogy, the chains are behaving as the automobile industry did in the 1950s and '60s. Detroit, he points out, "focused on marketing and allowed productivity to grow slowly." We all know what happened to Detroit, though the low-productivity, high-turnover strategy has not yet led to crisis for the franchises. ("No foreign competitors have emerged," Luxenberg observes.) And as doom impends, it's jubilee for the upper echelon: "The low wages of workers have financed expensive marketing campaigns, high salaries for executives, and healthy profits for shareholders."

Billions have thus been invested in the expansion of low-productivity chains, hastening the decline of the industrial economy. Luxenberg quotes Edmund Ayoub, an economist for the United Steelworkers: "The real danger is that the service industries don't have any regenerative power," he says. "If you serve a hamburger at McDonald's you don't generate any jobs beyond that." (Luxenberg fails to comment on this novel insight from Ayoub. But if Ayoub is correct, there may be an additional explanation of McDonald's success: 50 million hamburgers spontaneously generated. *Ex nihilo* Big Mac *fit*!)

Regardless, it is obvious that the desire for fast food will cost us dearly. Paychecks that should have been invested to create honest jobs were foolishly squandered on the ephemeral French fry. As a result, says Luxenberg, "the United States is coming to resemble a Third World country, where a small group of the wealthy reigns, served by the majority of the people who live in poverty."

Those whose preference for fast food has taken workers off the assembly line and left them mopping McDonald's floors should not, however, blame themselves. The fault lies elsewhere: "The powerful marketing programs of the franchise companies pulled money into businesses that offered low productivity and could do little to help generate the goods-exporting jobs the country needed." There is, apparently, a world of difference between money freely spent and money pulled. (Luxenberg also offers practical advice for dealing with the demands of children who have been enthralled by fast-food marketing. "Shopping for meals a week or two in advance, the efficient parent could use a microwave oven and paper plates to serve the same prepackaged pizzas and hamburgers the chains sell.")

It is bad enough that the chains have suckered so many otherwise rational and efficient people. Even worse, they have destroyed the Mom and Pop businesses of yore, foreclosing for millions the possibility of ever leading a happy, healthy life. The reasoning here shows Luxenberg at his best: "Franchises have destroyed local businesses that served as informal community centers and places for people to make contact," he says. "On the strip the customer is encouraged to drop in and leave quickly." As one authority on the subject puts it, "If contact leads to recognition, recognition to liking, liking to friendship, and friendship to social activities, then it can be said that contact leads to happiness." Thus Luxenberg's syllogism: Mom and Pop's provided contact, contact leads to happiness, franchises destroyed Mom and Pop's, no more happiness.

Society itself, in the end, is threatened by the chains. Their very garishness, their signs and designs, are an assault on all who see them. "It is not clear that the harshness of the strips is only a little harmless capitalist frolic," Luxenberg cautions. A study by psychologist Abraham Maslow con-

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firms this point. Maslow placed subjects in beautiful, average, and ugly rooms. They were then shown pictures of people, and "subjects in the average and beautiful rooms on the whole took a more optimistic view of the pictures. . . . " Luxenberg draws the evident conclusion: Businessmen who advertise in public places "should be required to protect the public's psychological health."

Finally, there is the cultural menace of enforced standardization. The goal of the chains "is to achieve predictable mediocrity." This is truly a global crisis. Ronald McDonald, Luxenberg warns, "now speaks ten languages." (In Japan, for example, he is Donald McDonald, "a name local customers can pronounce.")

Who then has the power to take on the chains? Alas, the prospects are dim: "The chains also take away political power." Yet *Roadside Empires* offers only gradualist solutions—unionization, FTC regulation, local zoning. It is as if, hamstrung by timidity, Luxenberg forgets what he has uncovered: The victims of the chains are legion! Surely it is time for them to unite and rise up against the burger behemoth. What do they have to lose? □

MISS MANNERS' GUIDE TO EXCRUCIATINGLY CORRECT BEHAVIOR

Judith Martin/Warner Books/$10.95, paper

Alexandra Schönburg

Judith Martin's book *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* is an admirable attempt to exhume the art of manners. Her book has come in the nick of time; the barbarians are at our doors. Some are even inside with their feet up on the sofa. They must be stopped before they proceed to the powder room, and let us pray that Miss Manners is hard at work on a sequel. Sad to say, at the rate we are going we certainly cannot have enough of Miss Manners. I expect that one day soon, Judith Martin will have to write such excruciatingly correct guides as: *How to Tell When it is Raining, How to Eat with Your Feet, How a Lady Gets in and out of Her Bathtub.*

When I finished the book I was so troubled that I decided to fly off to civilized climes to view for myself the condition of contemporary manners, hoping against hope that somewhere on the globe there might still be a civilized society. Alas, gentle reader (as Miss Manners would say), I searched in vain. Only in Japan did I find some semblance of manners. In the end I went to Vienna, where I visited an old aunt of mine who still lives in our family's ancient, decrepit, and surely haunted palace. She has not left its chill walls since the end of the Second World War and is therefore safely protected from modern society. My aunt listened with great interest as I read Miss Manners to her, but she was appalled that such a detailed guide should be necessary; after all, these were subjects that anybody from her world and generation understood instinctively, or at least by the time nurses, mademoiselles, frauleins, tutors, Jesuits—not to mention his mother and father and forty or so aunts and uncles—had finished with him and prepared him for the world.

My aunt's cardinal rule is one with which Miss Manners would no doubt agree: Good manners know no social barriers; there is no difference between manners for royalty and manners for servants. As a matter of fact, Auntie said, if someone spoke differently to a king than to a servant he was undoubtedly a fake. She told me of a day when the gamekeeper of their country estate came to lunch. Before dessert a finger bowl was placed in front of him. He drank it. In order not to embarrass the good man, everyone at the table did the same. (From that day on, incidentally, only mineral water was poured in the finger bowls.)

Good manners reveal a generosity and a refinement of spirit which very few people these days seem to possess. Imagine, for instance, the indelicacies that will strike you when you go to a restaurant in New York: Men will remain seated when a woman comes to the table; young girls do the same when an older man arrives; people speak familiarly in loud voices to the waiters and act like those rowdy types one used to see in Wild West movies (which, of course, my aunt has never seen). And the gossip is no longer about who is sleeping with whom but about money: who has made how many millions and how the millions were made.

On hearing this my poor aunt fell back on her *petit point* pillows and had to be given smelling salts. When she had regained herself, she said, "Perhaps my favorite writer, Taki, is right: 'Manners and etiquette died when the sixties generation decided that solipsism was more important than humanism. Under the guise of protest for a better world, rudeness became *de riguer,* and boorishness a virtue. It was hip to be discourteous, trendy to act primitive, and 'in' to be coarse.' "

I assured my aunt that Miss Manners agreed, and quoted her the following passage:

> Now . . . it is our faults for which we are loved. Imperfect table manners are considered a sign of subscribing to the principles of democracy; ignorance of high culture to be an indication of spirituality; and blurting, rough speech to be a cure to perfect honesty.

My aunt thought for a moment. "I am sure," she said, "that this book has instructed very well. But don't you think, my dear, that first they should have tried fire hoses to beat some order into these barbarians' heads?" But my aunt, being who she is and having the curiosity of the well-bred, was interested in all Miss Manners's charming disquisitions. Her discussion of jealousy—she considers it a most disgraceful human weakness—reminded my aunt of a friend of hers, who decided one day to visit his wife at the family castle. To his surprise he found room after room unlocked and no footman in sight. Opening one last door he understood why: There was the footman *in flagrante* with his wife. The husband merely bowed to her and remarked: "Think, madame, how embarrassing this would have been if someone else had come in!"

When Miss Manners reminded us of "the charm of the old custom of calling; of paying a short visit . . . [which] is now regarded as time consuming and boring and has been replaced by television," my aunt reflected on the Victorian custom that required a gentleman, when visiting a lady, to always keep his hat. "He did not give it to a footman, but would keep it at his side," she said. "Otherwise, he would be compromising the lady."

I quoted Miss Manners on the hideous American weakness for addressing people by their first names: "It has become commonplace to use first names promiscuously," I read, and poor Auntie had to fan herself, and have the windows opened. She felt better when I continued: "Such usage is not only undignified but makes a sham of the ideas of friendship and equality. There is no such thing as instant intimacy."

Miss Manners writes with equal charm, wit, and perceptiveness on any number of other topics: house guests, romance, weddings, the importance of "little" dinner parties and writing letters. She is more than a present-day Emily Post; she is the premier social observer of our time.

When I left my aunt was quite exhausted, for my visit had been taxing, although she was careful to assure me that our discussion had deeply interested her. She urged me not to forget what Confucius had said: "As the laws multiply, the civilization decays." We cannot hold off the barbarians forever, but maybe in the meantime we can teach them good manners. □

Alexandra Schönburg, whose family dates back to the 11th century, practices good manners in Manhattan, Southampton, and the Alps.

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SON SANN BLUE

by Malcolm Gladwell

"I don't want to talk about the past," is how Son Sann put it. Testy, curt, and final. Didn't he say the same thing on the MacNeil-Lehrer show a week earlier? The leader of the largest of the two pro-Western guerrilla forces fighting the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia was insistent. He had not come to talk about Lon Nol's coup of 1970, the rapid American pullout from southeast Asia in 1975 that opened the door to Pol Pot, or even the subsequent Khmer Rouge holocaust. Son Sann had come simply to support the efforts in Congress—led by liberal House Democrats such as Steve Solarz (D-NY)—to grant $5 million in military aid to his forces (the KPNLF) and those of Prince Sihanouk.[1]

This was a delicate mission, and if Cambodian history was to help at all, it could begin no earlier than 1978, when the country suffered its most recent indignity at the hands of the Vietnamese. Beyond that, the past did not square with the image of diplomatic respectability Son Sann presented. For here at last squeamish congressmen seemed to have a truly legitimate freedom fighter; not just a democrat, but the Prime Minister-in-exile of the UN-sanctioned Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. Given those credentials, who wanted to dwell on the fact that the largest member of the coalition is Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge, and who wanted a reminder that yesterday's butcher was today's formal ally?

To be sure, both the KPNLF and its congressional backers take great pains to point out that the Kampuchean Coalition is in many ways a marriage of convenience. The activities of the KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge are entirely autonomous, it is insisted, and not one penny of the proposed military assistance will go to Pol Pot.

It does matter that Sol Sann and Pol Pot are allied, because they share a common goal: defeating the Vietnamese. And unless the proposed assistance does something to frustrate the Khmer Rouge's ends, the fact that Pol Pot is not a direct beneficiary of military assistance is meaningless: We will still fight his battles for him.

And does the bill take this into account? Evidently not. Within the Kampuchean Coalition the Khmer Rouge has by far the strongest army. Five million dollars in aid is not enough to change that, and nothing less than an extraordinary U.S. commitment is capable of matching and surpassing the kind of support the Khmer Rouge can get from China. Is Congress prepared to make such a commitment? If not, we must face the fact that so long as the Khmer Rouge remains the dominant anti-Vietnamese faction, every dollar spent defeating Vietnam may actually hasten Pol Pot's return to power.

Son Sann certainly realizes this, but as a nationalist seems to have decided that the Khmer Rouge is the lesser of two evils. Congress's road to the same conclusion has been more tortuous.[2] Addressing his colleagues on the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee in March, Solarz pointed out that "in the case of Afghanistan and Nicaragua, the people we are either helping or being asked to help are fighting against recognized governments, whatever one thinks of those governments . . . governments represented in the UN. . . . One ought to [aid them] covertly rather than overtly." In Cambodia, though, "the people who are resisting the Vietnamese occupation are essentially the government that we recognize. . . . A case might be made that it would not be inappropriate to help them through the Foreign Aid bill. . . ."

The point, Solarz explained, was to "distinguish the manner in which we provide help in Cambodia from the manner in which we provide help in Nicaragua and Afghanistan."

Late in June, Solarz performed the same gymnastics, albeit with a slightly different twist, for the *New York Times*: "In the third world, we must distinguish between wars of national liberation—as in Afghanistan and Cambodia, where it is appropriate to aid indigenous resistance forces—and civil wars—as in Nicaragua, where it is inappropriate for us to engage in efforts to overthrow internationally recognized governments."

Now, it is interesting that in the three months between March and June, Solarz seems to have discovered something rather shocking about the Soviet-installed government of Afghanistan. But it is telling that every time Solarz proposes supporting freedom fighters around the world, he justifies it not by discussing the intrinsic merits of the cause, but by drawing elaborate diplomatic distinctions.

Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), another liberal on the Asian and Pacific Affairs subcommittee, is also an outspoken advocate of aid to Cambodia. The bill fulfills one of his axioms about foreign affairs: "that whenever we are being involved in circumstances such as these, other nations [in this case, the countries in the Pacific basin] are taking the lead." In a certain way, Solarz's insistence on formal credentials is part of the same evasion of responsibility. He is willing to let the easy fictions of diplomacy take the place of moral judgments. He is happy to let others decide whether it is worth trading the difficulties of life today in Cambodia under the Vietnamese for a possible return of the Khmer Rouge. Son Sann and Prince Sihanouk are members of the Coalition Government of Kampuchea. For Steve Solarz, apparently, that is enough.

Yet there is more here than cowardice masquerading as legality. Solarz claims that "we need to learn the lessons of Vietnam, but it would be a tragic mistake if we were to be paralyzed by them." There is something forced about that "but." What *are* the lessons of Vietnam applied to these circumstances if not inherently paralytic? Vietnam taught that a war without clear long-term objectives cannot be won and should not be fought. In other words, the Vietnam experience argues forcefully against precisely the sort of short-sighted, ill-conceived action contemplated in Cambodia today. If Steve Solarz does not want to be paralyzed by the lessons of Vietnam, he has to ignore them entirely.

It is to escape the Vietnam legacy that the debate in Congress over Cambodia has turned inward. Discussion of the hard issues, an appreciation of the kind of commitment the situation cries out for, has been pre-empted by a partisan contest over "toughness" and "will." Perhaps the bill's House supporters have heeded Ben Wattenberg's recent warning that if the Democrats continue opposing an activist foreign policy "at a time when they are trying to show how tough they are, they will be demonstrating that they are wimps." How else could Steve Solarz declare that "we must be prepared to put our money where our mouth is" when he has spent his career doing exactly the opposite? *I don't want to talk about the past.* At least for Son Sann it was a painful decision. Many in Congress don't want to talk about the past because they don't dare. □

[1]Sann was brought to America by the Washington-based Freedom Federation, a fascinating human rights group that acts as a hub for Iron Curtain émigré groups in this country.

[2]Not all of the bill's backers implicitly chose the Khmer Rouge over the Vietnamese. During House hearings earlier this year, one of them, Toby Roth (R-Wisc.), didn't seem to know the difference:

Roth: . . . My view is that we would like to help the Contras, for example, in Nicaragua. But I do not think the government in Nicaragua is carrying on a holocaust. I do not think they are slaughtering people . . . .I think it is a bad government for the country, but they are not carrying on a holocaust.

Now, if I can just make this statement, in Kampuchea, we are told, in fact you yourself had mentioned, that some 2 to 3 million people have been slaughtered. We have got our politicians running around this country and running around the world saying no more holocausts, and yet when it comes to something like this, then we ask for a very meager amount at best to help these people. Now there is something very wrong here somewhere, isn't there?

Asst. Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz: Mr. Congressman . . . I do not think that it is fair to say that there is a holocaust going on there, now.

Roth: 2 to 3 million people killed?

Wolfowitz: That comes from the period when the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia . . .

Malcolm Gladwell is the assistant editor at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

COMING

David Evanier

THE LAST STALINIST

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PRESSWATCH

(continued from page 23)

doned in rape cases, and the Dotson case found them unreceptive precisely because it suggested that false charges are made and can lead to grave injustice. Hence the *Daily News* editorial's fear that it would "be used by people who are already hostile to rape victims to prevent their coming forward."

The case continued. In April, Judge Richard Samuels rejected Mr. Dotson's plea for release and refused to believe Mrs. Webb's retraction. On this occasion, the *New York Times* atoned for its earlier silence with a crisp and to the point editorial. The judge had cited various legal precedents for not accepting retractions of a witness's testimony as grounds for setting aside a conviction. That's all very well, responded the *Times*, but "none of the precedents cited by the judge involved the changed testimony of the complainant, the supposed victim." Otherwise, the commentators walked very warily in the shadow of the feminist theory of rape.

And this became clear when Governor Thompson declared at the end of the Illinois clemency hearings that Mr. Dotson was guilty, "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt"—indeed, that the evidence against him at the hearing had been even stronger than that before the original trial—but that justice would not be served by keeping him in prison any longer. Such a verdict made no sense in terms of logic. If Dotson was guilty of the especially vile crime of rape, why was justice served in releasing him before his sentence was up? But it made perfect political sense. It freed Dotson and so calmed popular indignation at an innocent man's imprisonment. But it also upheld a rape conviction obtained on little or no evidence and so soothed feminist anxieties that stricter standards of evidence in rape trials might be in the offing. Dotson might strive for another trial to clear his name (against the ferocious persistence of prosecutors who were curiously reluctant to test the evidence they claimed was overwhelming). But there would be no real public anger supporting his efforts.

Governor Thompson's calculations proved shrewd—in regard to the press, at least. The *Times*, slinking back into line, decided that the governor had "calmly resolved this case with fairness to the complainant, the prisoner, the legal system and the society." Wrong on all four counts, I reckon. The *Daily News* was a little short of ecstatic. It was "a sensible human conclusion" which "serves the best interest of justice." And thus spoke the liberal establishment in general.

It took the *Chicago Lawyer*, an investigative monthly dealing with legal issues (on whose account of the background I have relied greatly), to show up all this for the nonsense it was. In its May and June issues, it set out to examine the evidence that convicted Dotson in the first trial. This was of two types: Mrs. Webb's testimony and forensic evidence that seemed to corroborate it. This latter consisted of "several" pubic hairs found on her body which were microscopically similar to Dotson's hair but dissimilar to her own; semen found in Mrs. Webb's underpants which could only have come from someone with Dotson's rare blood group (about 10 percent of the male population); and the statement that until the alleged rape Mrs. Webb had been a virgin.

Mrs. Webb's testimony has, of course, since been recanted. And though other witnesses at the Illinois clemency hearing, like her former boyfriend, challenged her recantation, their evidence consisted chiefly of asserting that they had been convinced by her original testimony. Even so, as the *Chicago Lawyer*'s June editorial argued, "however skeptical one may be of the recantation, it is nonsensical to say that her original testimony together with her recantation is stronger than her original testimony standing alone." That absurdity is the precise conclusion reached by Governor Thompson.

Mrs. Webb's original testimony is futher undermined by the results of a survey of rape allegations carried out by Charles P. McDowell, chief of the Special Studies Division of the Directorate of Investigative Analysis of the USAF Office of Special Investigations, featured in the June issue. Of 1,218 rape accusations examined in the study, 460 were classified as proven, 202 as false, and 546 as unresolved. (To forestall an obvious objection, I should add that the criterion for classifying a charge as false—namely, the complainant's admission that it had been invented—was far stricter than the criteria for deciding it was proven.) McDowell's study revealed that false rape accusations generally had certain features in common. Mrs. Webb's original accusation fits the pattern of falsity almost uncannily. It has twelve of the features identified in the study, including that an accusation solves some "problem" for the false victim and that scratches and cuts resembling words or letters are found on the false victim.

At the very least, then, Mrs. Webb's original testimony looked less damaging to Dotson six years later. And coupled with her recantation, it made a very weak case indeed.

What of the corroborative physical evidence? *Chicago Lawyer*'s May issue examined this exhaustively—showing that half of it was worthless and the other half served to exonerate Dotson! Thus:

1. There were not "several" pubic hairs similar to Dotson's and dissimilar to Webb's. There was one! And hair comparisons are, anyway, matters of very subjective interpretation. Since the forensic scientist at the original trial was shown to have greatly exaggerated his qualifications, that settles that.

2. Dotson's blood type is not rare. It is shared with 67 percent of the male population. In a male population of three million, that gives him a one-in-a-million chance of being the (hypothetical) rapist.

3. Mrs. Webb was not a virgin. Her former boyfriend, who contests her story on other points, confirms her present testimony on that.

So the three corroborative points of forensic evidence fall by the wayside. But wait—there is more. Evidence was presented in the original trial that there were two bloodstains containing blood type A antigens on Mrs. Webb's blouse and underpants which could not have come from either Dotson or Webb. It is true that antigens can be the result of outside pollution. *But tests ruled this out.* So bloodstains from someone who was neither Dotson nor Webb were found on Webb's underclothes. Such evidence, though not decisive, should have been greatly to Dotson's advantage. But the trial transcript shows that the prosecutor misrepresented this evidence, repeatedly claiming that the antigens were from external polluters; that the trial judge did not sustain an objection to such misrepresentation; and that an appeals judge simply misunderstood the evidence and repeated the error of attributing the antigens to pollution.

To sum up: Mrs. Webb's recantation greatly devalues her original testimony and the forensic evidence now points to Dotson's innocence rather than to his guilt. Does this mean that he is indeed innocent? No. It is not possible to argue that with complete assurance. To demonstrate positive innocence beyond a reasonable doubt is immensely difficult. (Here's a simple test: Try demonstrating that *you* are innocent of a rape that occurred in your neighborhood eight years ago. Short of a cast-iron alibi, you won't be able to do it.) It does mean that no reasonable person could claim that he is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Yet that is exactly what Thompson did claim—and for that he was praised as sensible, humane, calm, wise, and just by all the grave and reverend seniors of liberal journalism. When I think of their cold careless ignorance and compare it to Miss Phyllis George's instinctive good-heartedness in the same matter, I feel like hugging her myself. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from 46)

nesburg my wife and I were faced with the same bustling determination on the part of both blacks and whites as to make us quite literally fight for our place. We never met a black man who doffed his hat let alone made way for us. At a certain time of the day black school children in uniform massed in the downtown area. In general they exhibited the same heedless manners towards adults, black and white, as can be seen in any American city.

An elderly white man protested strongly when a black cleaning woman insisted on rolling her cart onto our already filled hotel elevator. She ignored him and it was he, grumbling feebly, who got off.

At the Cape Town Railroad Station the youthful conductor held up our train, smiling indulgently as he encouraged a passenger to hurry. Eventually a huge black woman appeared shuffling along at her own deliberate pace. Not until she was aboard did the train move. That same conductor was not at all indulgent with us when he found out that our tickets had been purchased the day before, an offense which we hadn't caught in the fine print.

There were other incidents between blacks and whites which suggest something other than a totally harsh and sordid confrontation. As the first Afrikaner we met told us: "Ours is a complex country. If you can't solve our problems in the first 24 hours you are here, you never will."

In most comments about South Africa the pious hope is expressed that justice may be served without the need of force. But it seems to me that many such commentators are like those who go to boxing matches; what they really have on their mind is a desire to watch and encourage mayhem.

—Karl Hultberg
Springerville, Arizona

Matthew Stevenson replies:
To test the attention of their readers, the New York papers have taken to running a weekly news quiz. The *Post* likes to ask a lot of questions about "Dallas" and "Dynasty." The *Times* prefers that its readers name the Moslem caliphs that Shiites consider usurpers.

The weekly quizzes came to mind as I read the correspondence, some of which is published here, responding to my article on South Africa. Maybe it's

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CURRENT WISDOM

The Humanist

Prof. William R. Harwood reveals the morbid state of those women he has known:

While all but the culturally Schlaflyed applauded the attempt to drag religion into the twentieth century, even at the price of altering "revealed truth," what nobody seems to have realized is that a translation of the Judeo-Christian Bible that does not offend women is analogous to a translation of *Mein Kampf* that does not offend Jews.

[May/June 1985]

L.A. Reader

More shanty intellectualism from one of Hollywood's gifted minds, Mr. Martin Sheen:

How do you view the awareness of the American people at the moment?

Right now it's nil. They are being made to worry about taxes and financial concerns—that's at the top of the list. But I have great faith in the American people. I don't have that much faith in the American leadership, at this time, but I have a greater faith in the people.

This current administration, I'm afraid, is flirting with an awful lot of evil and it really worries me. This is an administration that believes in death. It worships death. It stockpiles weapons, it thrives on paranoia; it makes a great deal of money off of death, and a lot of people around the world suffer as a result.

The United States has only six percent of the world's population yet we use fifty-three percent of what the world produces. There's a great imbalance, and we pay very dearly for it—with our divorce rates, our alcoholism, our drug abuse, our suicides, our child abuse, and our wife beatings. We pay for it with our killing each other and we pay for it with poisoning the earth and poisoning the atmosphere and poisoning the water and poisoning our hearts. . . .

But Reagan disturbs you?

This is the most dangerous man on earth. . . . I struggle to love my fellow man, no matter if it's the President or whoever.

You even make an attempt to love a man like Ronald Reagan?

You must love. When we were at the Cruz Roja [Red Cross] in Managua we gave blood as a sign of solidarity. Our American brothers were taking blood and we wanted to have a sign of giving it back. And I gave my blood in the name of my brother Ronald Reagan.

[April 12, 1985]

Indianapolis Star

Miss Joan Baez reveals that she too has been a victim of child abuse:

"My father was a physicist and we figured out how long it would take a missile to get from Moscow to Palo Alto High School. We realized the [school authorities] were lying. We wouldn't have time to call parents, walk home or sit in a cellar."

[May 6, 1985]

New York Review of Books

Something for the gray *NYRB*'s gloomy pedants to experience true joy over—in a reminiscence of Tennessee Williams ("the Bird"), the late Gore Vidal recounts a long lost lunch and but one more Camelotian tragedy:

Actually, the Bird had never heard of Kennedy that day in 1958 when we drove from Miami to Palm Beach for lunch with the golden couple, who had told me that they lusted to meet the Bird. He, in turn, was charmed by them. "Now tell me again," he would ask Jack, repeatedly, "what you are. A governor or a senator?" Each time, Jack, dutifully, gave name, rank, and party. Then the Bird would sternly quiz him on America's China policy; and Jack would look a bit glum. Finally, he proposed that we shoot at a target in the patio.

While Jackie flitted about, taking Polaroid shots of us, the Bird banged away at the target; and proved to be a better shot than our host. At one point, while Jack was shooting, the Bird muttered in my ear, "Get that ass!" I said, "Bird, you can't cruise our next president." The Bird chuckled ominously: "They'll never elect those two. They are much too attractive for the American people." Later, I told Jack that the Bird had commented favorably on his ass. He beamed. "Now, that's *very* exciting," he said. But, fun and games to one side, it is, of course, tragic that both men were, essentially, immature sexually and so incapable of truly warm *mature* human relations. One could weep for what might have been.

[June 13, 1985]

Santa Barbara News and Review

The mayor of modern-day Santa Barbara answers the query "What were you doing during the Vietnam War?" and conjures up her heroic past:

It was an awful period of time. I was tending my children then, mostly. Very early on, I thought we had no business being there, though I kept quiet. It was not a particularly popular point of view at first, but it became plainer and plainer that we had no business being there. And we finally got out. For a long time afterwards though, I cringed whenever I'd hear a helicopter.

[April 25, 1985]

Cornell Daily Sun

The enlightened views of anthropologist David Sonenschein, a former research assistant at the Kinsey Institute and now apparently a full-time performer on the college Chautauqua circuit:

Moral panic has created a notion of gays and lesbians as "folk devils," Sonenschein said, and the same idea has become associated with pedophiles.

Sonenschein added that "stereotyping and scapegoating" have resulted in "a lot of psychological baggage placed on these individuals. . . . These are the same psychological and stereotypical instruments" used against blacks and Jews.

Sonenschein also addressed the question of incest, saying "sex in the family is not traumatic." Stereotyping does not allow those who engage in "sex in the family" or pedophilia the freedom to conduct their lives as they choose, he said. . . .

When people assume that sex in child-adult relationships is damaging for the child involved, Sonenschein said they are reverting back to the 1960s view that "children are sexually innocent." In fact, he said, "children are sexual." Some children seek out child-adult relationships, and those who do are "resilient" enough to overcome whatever trauma may be involved.

When asked how society can judge whether a child desires a role in the child-adult relationship, Sonenschein said children usually express their desires verbally.

Negative reaction to child-adult relationships has put this society into an inquisitional era not unlike past "anti-masturbation campaigns" in which "witch-hunts" were part of a campaign to eliminate behavior that was considered morally deviant, he said.

[March 20, 1985]

Policy Review

Policy Review, a quarterly of unsurpassed perspicacity and good looks, invites Dr. Jane Hodgson, a professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School, into its pages to exhibit her steadfast intelligence:

After delivery at 40 weeks the fetus is called an infant, destruction of which is called murder. This is morally unjustified anywhere, anytime. . . .

Legalized abortion is justifiable. It prevents unwanted pregnancies, battered children, juvenile delinquency, congenital defects, and compulsory teenage pregnancies. It protects maternal and infant health by providing for child spacing, granting a woman control of her reproductive life, a basic human right. Legalized abortion is therefore a humane medical service—often an act of love.

[Spring 1985]

Gambier Journal

Another paraverbal assault from the authoress of *Sexism and God-talk*, Miss Rosemary Radford Ruether:

The ultimate root of this concept of transcendent masculinity is the fear of finitude or mortality and the desire to establish some basis by which the masculine ego can remain ultimately secure from the threat of mortality. Both the patriarchal image of God and of the flight of the soul to eternal life have been deeply shaped by this concept of masculinity as transcendent to mortality, and the abhorrence of femaleness as the image of mortal life. . . .

Dichotomized psychic profiles of masculinity and femininity have particularly become exaggerated in modern bourgeois culture as the reflection of the dichotomization of paid work outside the home and unpaid "housework" inside the home. This work-home dichotomy is a development of modern industrialization. So the cultural split between men and women functions to socialize each into accepting their limited roles and spheres of life.

[May 1985]

Los Angeles Times

Professor Ron Westover departs from his friendly rodents, bugs, and bats to deliver a timely elucidation of New Age Ethics:

So, you think you have some sort of divine insight as to who should and should not be sacrificed on the altar of medical research. Well, so do I. It has never been right and never will be right to slaughter animals on behalf of mankind for any reason! Animals are innocent of any crimes against humanity. Their only sin is that they are helpless and mute. . . .

If subjects are needed to render accurate knowledge about the workings of the human organism there is an endless supply. Take the extreme elderly, the senile, use the criminally insane, rapists and murderers. They are largely useless and doomed anyway. —Ron Westover
San Diego, California

[May 3, 1985]

Wall Street Journal

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. makes a pilgrimage to the holy city of Havana and returns sparkling with the bromides of his faith:

First it must be said that Mr. Castro has survived because he is intelligent, realistic and flexible. His frustration is that he is a leader too big for a small country—too big in his ambitions, in his energies and in his ideas. He would like to run the world, or, failing that, the Third World, or failing that, Latin America. His motives, to do him justice, include not only love of power but also a genuine desire for social betterment; not, alas, much visible concern for individual or political freedom.

As he has grown older and experienced setbacks, he has scaled down his dreams. He has an interesting capacity to admit mistakes.

[June 12, 1985]

Indianapolis Star

Eloquence in pursuit of the metaphysical from the Republic's most venerated ax-grinder:

Americans have become so manipulated by corporate interests and big government that their values are askew, says consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

"How many students spend more time on the arms race than their arm pits? Think about it," he told an audience at Arvada (Colo.) United Methodist Church Saturday.

[May 6, 1985]

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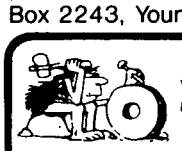

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 46)

time for *The American Spectator* to start its own quiz, at least for those who write letters to the editor? The reason I am suggesting a course in remedial reading is that nearly all the mail either incorrectly summarizes what I wrote or, worse, attacks the piece for positions it did not take.

I have a hard time addressing some of the good questions Mr. Harrigan raises because he has taken my description of meeting Alan Paton and applied it to Beyers Naude who, as another point of clarification, did not advocate socialism as the solution in South Africa in his *New York Times* op-ed article. What he said, in summary, was: "I do not believe that the United States can determine the direction or momentum of change in South Africa, but it can help the South African government to understand and accept what is happening."

Because of my description of blacks in Johannesburg and Soweto, Mr. Van De Graaff infers that I am marshaling these observations for an indictment of the policy of constructive engagement. But he is the only one making such a connection. I went to South Africa to write about what I saw and heard, not to write a policy brief. The piece makes no mention of divestiture, its pros and cons, nor does it advance solutions for the Reagan Administration. I don't think it is the place of America to tell South Africans, black or white, what to do, but I agree with Mr. Naude, who also wrote in the *Times* that the "the United States must help us minimize the emerging violence and maximize the chances of peaceful change." That is the reason I wrote that South Africa's cures lie in greater contact with the West.

Obviously, to address Mr. Van De Graaff's second point, there are many differences between South Africa and the Soviet Union. One reason I chose to write the piece in what Mr. Harrigan might call a "fly-in-fly-out" style, was to illustrate that the country, despite its political problems, is hospitable to visitors from the West, especially the United States.

Nevertheless, I chose to make the allusion to the Soviet Union, not only because I have seen both, but to make the point that the values of the South African government have little in common with our own. One rationale for American support of Praetoria is that without help from Washington, Moscow-led insurgents will take the Cape along with the strategic minerals and ocean passages. But, as things stand today, blacks live in a gulag of townships and homelands, dissidents are often treated harshly—the case of Steven Biko, only the most notorious—and the ruling party is one that resisted entering World War II on the side of the Allies. What we fear in South Africa's future may already have arrived.

I am glad to have Mr. Hultberg's letter, and to consider his optimism that peaceful solutions can be found. Finally, Mr. Shattan answers more eloquently than I can why a piece such as mine has a place in a magazine like *The American Spectator.*

Out of the Closet

Thank you, George McCartney (*TAS*, April 1985). I can now freely admit that I am a diarist.

Of course, I still prefer to call it my journal. But it's a diary nonetheless.

McCartney's sensitive and intelligent review of Thomas Mallon's *A Book of One's Own* gave me a way of understanding what I'm doing by scribbling away in secret.

In the future, I will take great pleasure in entertaining guests with a little 1981, or perhaps some of this fresh 1985?

—Paul Zukowski
Phoenix, Arizona

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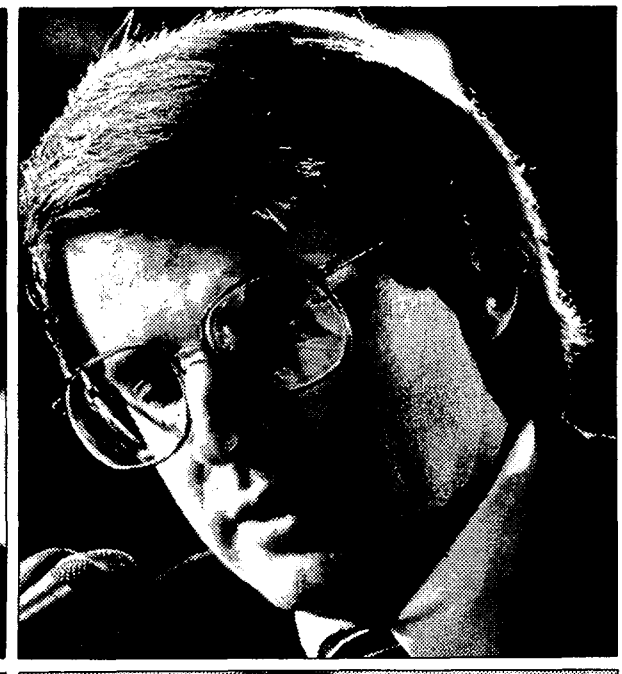

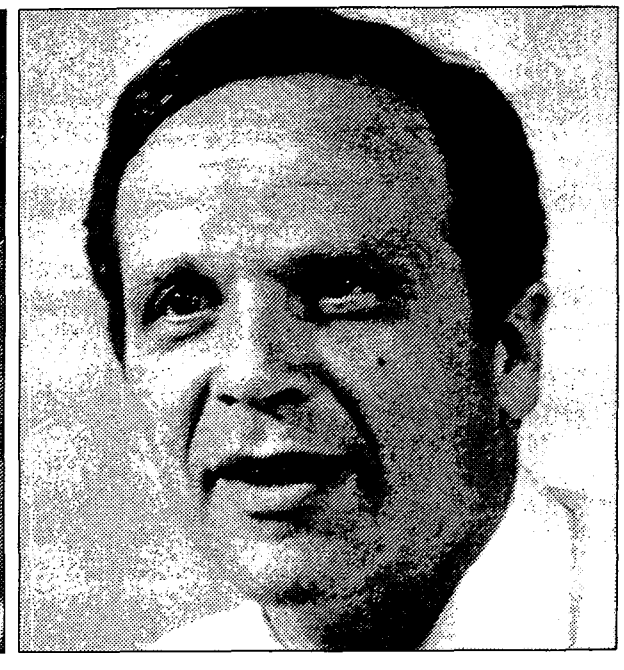

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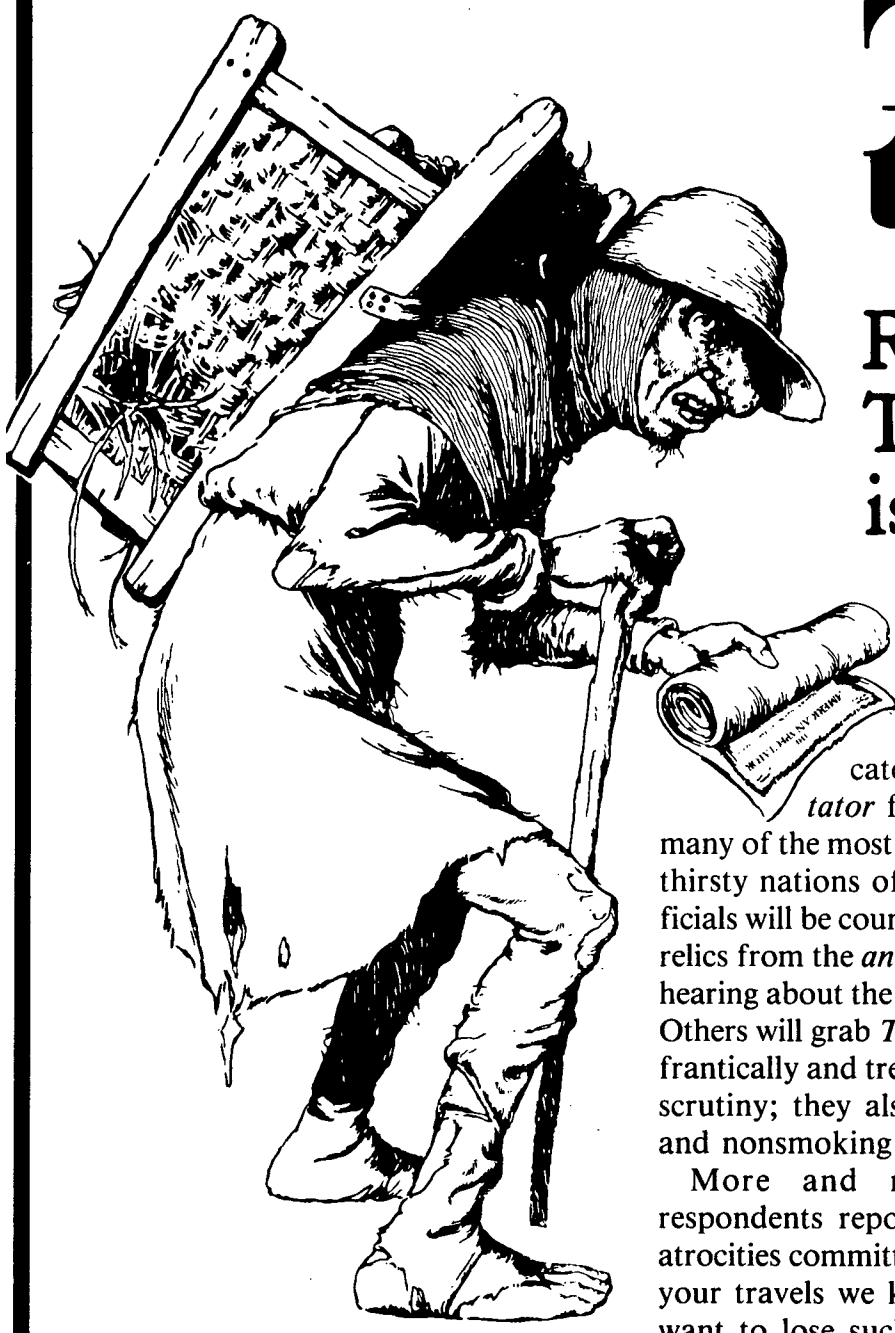

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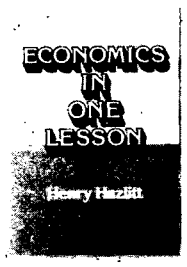

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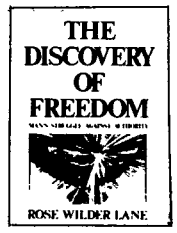

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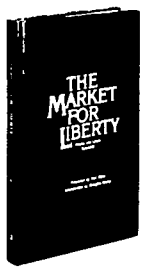

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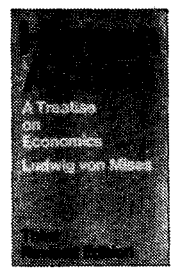

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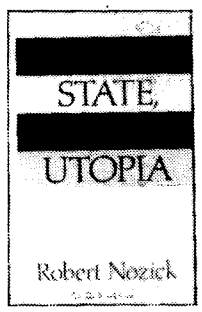

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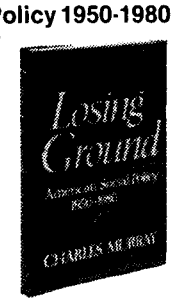

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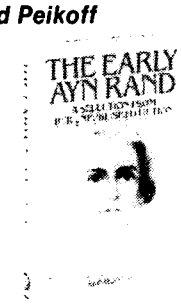

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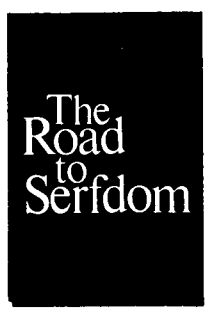

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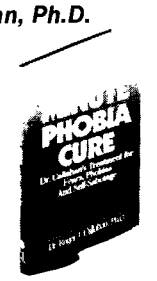

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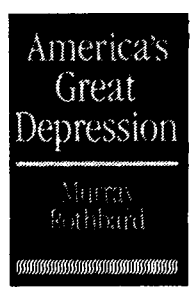

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